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Ontario Training
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Conseil ontarien de
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de la main-d'œuvre

F U T U R E S

FUTURES

Work
Experience
Program
Review

FINAL REPORT

October 1994

F U T U R E S

FUTURES - WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM REVIEW
STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Rorry Cruikshank	FUTURES, Sir Sandford Fleming College, Peterborough
Bill McDougall	Family "Y" Employment Services, Owen Sound
Marian Mlakar (Project Manager)	Learning and Employment Preparation Branch, Ontario Training and Adjustment Board
Mike Racine	Cambrian College of Applied Arts and Technology, Sudbury
Barbara Storrison	Learning and Employment Preparation Branch, Ontario Training and Adjustment Board

PAST MEMBERS

Dick Grannan	FUTURES, Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, Richmond Hill (formerly)
Carol Libby	FUTURES, St. Clair College, Windsor (formerly)
Neil McMahon	St. Catharines Youth and Community Employment Services, St. Catharines (formerly)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The FUTURES Work Experience Program (WEP) review was undertaken by the Youth Unit of the Learning and Employment Preparation (LEP) Branch, of the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board (OTAB), in partnership with its service delivery network. Led by a Steering Committee, its intent was to determine whether the program design is still relevant to youth needs and the current and emerging labour market. This completes the analysis of all year-long youth employment programs funded by the LEP Branch.

The objective of the FUTURES program is "to assist unemployed and employment disadvantaged youth, age 16-24 (up to age 29 for persons with a disability), to make a successful transition to the competitive labour market. This is done through a combination of counselling, both individual and group, skills and educational upgrading and work experience". FUTURES is currently delivered by 56 Youth Employment Counselling Centres (YECCs) and 23 Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (community colleges) across the province.

Information was collected and interpreted through a variety of means. These include an environmental scan, literature review on the needs of youth and province-wide youth consultation on employment issues, and statistical and financial reports on the program (1986 to 1994). As well, input and opinions of major stakeholders were collected through surveys and focus groups (youth participants, employers, school board academic staff, WEP delivery staff, and WEP delivery agency directors/managers).

In general, the key findings indicate a great deal of commitment and support for the WEP program by all major stakeholders. Along with the value of the specific work experience, learning work adjustment skills (such as how to fit into the workplace) and communication skills, were rated as being among the most valuable benefits of the program. However, stakeholders also identified a great deal of potential for growth and program improvements. It appears that the program is being delivered with less creativity and flexibility than is possible under the current guidelines.

Specific key findings are as follows:

- Despite higher levels of education, the needs of participants have increased due to a changing environment and the labour market. As a result, most cannot be considered as job ready when they begin their programs. A strengthened vocational counselling and employment preparation component is necessary. However, this requires complementarity with other employment programs for youth.

- There is a need to clarify the current program objectives to ensure a common understanding. As well, there is a need to revisit and renew these objectives in light of current and emerging youth and labour market needs. This should be examined in the context of complementarity with other programs, at both the design and delivery levels.

- The current guidelines and the flexibility which exists around program durations and options should be clarified.

- creating a standardized intake process for both FUTURES components (PEP and WEP), promoted with all service providers; and

- developing specific program materials (skill profile inventory, personal development plan, participant tracking materials and activities/workshop materials and information covering vocational, life and life-long learning skills).

All of this material was developed and published in February of 1992 as The PEP Manual, which is designed to assist deliverers in providing a responsive, participant-driven program. Renewed PEP was implemented in all communities in 1992/93.

Although the WEP review follows the renewal of PEP, this process is different both by its design and the resources utilized to conduct the review. (Please see Section 2.0 Review Methodology).

1.2   OBJECTIVES OF THE REVIEW

This section presents the major issues which shaped this project. They are grouped under general categories of program design and program functions. The WEP review elicited general feedback and comments from the major stakeholders of the program (participants, employers, academic staff, FUTURES staff, and directors/managers of the WEP program) on the perceived strengths and limitations of the current program in meeting their collective objectives.

a)   To Review Program Design and Assess the Needs of Youth

These are the major program design issues which were identified for the review:

- **the appropriateness of the current program objectives, eligibility criteria and option mix in the context of identified youth needs;**

  The current program objective, as defined in the WEP guidelines, is to assist job-ready youth to gain work experience and training/upgrading to improve their long-term attachment to the labour force. There is some indication that youth have pre-placement needs which require additional programming and support before and during time in work and/or training placement. This review addresses the general needs of youth in the context of the current and emerging labour market, and the "presenting needs" of WEP participants, as defined by the major stakeholders of the program.

- **the use and current interpretations of the guidelines, in light of the need to balance limited dollars against the growing demand for service;**

  In a review of program design, it is necessary to examine how the program is being delivered in relation to its design, and how the guidelines are being interpreted to balance individual participants' needs with the growing demand for service. This includes local decisions by delivery agents to manage participant demand within existing budgets. In addition, the option of levering employer dollars through their financial contributions, is considered.

- **dollars paid to participants; and**

  The role of income support paid to participants as part of the program entitlement (stipends), as well as the need for supplementary support assistance (i.e. child care), are explored.

- **youth who are not successful at finding employment at the conclusion of the program.**

  Under the **current program design**, there is provision for participants who are not successful at securing employment at the end of their placements to be referred to a Youth Employment Counselling Centre or the Canada Employment Centre, if available in a given community. The design does not technically require that other appropriate services be accessed as part of the follow-up. The issue of access may not only be limited to a consideration of **available** community resources, but may also have implications on the quality of service for participants who may require post-placement assistance (e.g. where services are available, are they being **linked** to them?). The review examines what processes are in place in the service continuum to link participants to the services they may require at the conclusion of their placements.

b)   To Review Program Functions

These are the major program function issues identified for the review:

- **the effectiveness and current use of training plans;**

  As the major tool for documenting expectations, monitoring what is accomplished, and enhancing the commitment and understanding of stakeholders, training plans are evaluated for their usage and effectiveness.

- **the effectiveness of the pre-placement component;**

  With the revised FUTURES intake process, implemented through the PEP renewal, the quality of the pre-placement component is reviewed. Considerations include: the comprehensiveness of assessments with participants; the extent to which other stakeholders of the program are included in this process; the translation of this information into an appropriate vocational goal; and the degree of satisfaction with the matching of participants to suitable placements and program options.

- **communications, linkages and partnerships amongst stakeholder groups throughout the process; and**

  Building on the renewed PEP component, it is recognized that strong communication linkages and partnerships amongst all stakeholders are crucial to an effective service continuum. For this reason, the review evaluates the quantity and quality of contacts among stakeholders through-out the process for assessment, joint planning, monitoring and evaluation on a case by case basis, the use of community contacts and referrals by delivery staff as part of their case management function, and the coordination and linkages between service providers at a community level, and with various levels of government.

- **the extent to which the program has as its objective reconnecting of youth to education.**

  The importance of education and training to success in employment is well documented and understood. For this reason, the review examines how this is manifested in the program design, and the extent to which the program objectives actually reconnect youth to education. In functional terms, the review also considers the constraints on the program's ability to meet these objectives - such things as budget restrictions, relationships with school boards, parameters around the use of school credits, and the relationships which are developed between school and work.

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2.0
REVIEW METHODOLOGY

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2.1   INTRODUCTION

In November of 1991, a Steering Committee was formed to both lead and encourage consultation about the Work Experience Program (WEP) review.   Representatives were nominated from Youth Employment Counselling Centres, community colleges FUTURES offices, Ontario Association of Youth Employment Centres, Employer/Employee Training Development Committee, Ministry of Education (and Training), and Ontario Training and Adjustment Board. The management of this project was the responsibility of the Learning and Employment Preparation (LEP) Branch (formerly the Youth Employment Services Branch). For reasons of fiscal management, this review was conducted internally, using existing resources.

In order to provide a comprehensive overview of the operation and use of WEP, information was collected through a variety of means, including: an environmental scan; literature review on the needs of youth and province-wide youth consultation on employment issues; statistical and financial reports on the program; survey data; and focus group session feedback. The methodology for each is outlined below.

2.2   BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR REVIEW

The Baseline Data section of the report draws on two sources. Statistical information on current and past program operations (from 1986 to 1994) that have been provided by the delivery agents to the Branch on a regular basis, were analyzed to provide a background for program review.   This statistical record was supplemented by past and present financial information about the program.

The Labour Market Context for Youth section is based on a review of information from a variety of sources. Data was provided by Statistics Canada, the then Ministry of Labour's Labour Market Research Group (now with OTAB), and the Ministry of Treasury and Finance. Youth views and recommendations about employment and training were identified through the results of a recent province-wide consultation project. In 1993/94 the LEP Branch (formerly Youth Employment Services Branch) sponsored the Youth Policy Directions project (YPD) to obtain youth input on employment policy and programming. The YPD conducted a province-wide consultation on youth employment issues and facilitated input from a broad range of youth and community advocates. The final report is a valuable supplement to WEP Review data collected through surveys and focus groups. As well, a literature search of secondary sources was undertaken.

2.3   SURVEYS

The narrative, statistical and financial information outlined above was augmented by information collected through surveys which were mailed to the five groups directly involved in the delivery of the program - youth WEP participants, school board academic staff involved in delivering WEP options, employers who had placed WEP participants, WEP delivery staff in the community colleges and counselling centres, and WEP delivery agency directors/managers.

The surveys were designed to produce a "point-in-time" analysis and a provincial snap-shot of the program in 1992.   Results were evaluated and reconciled with the statistical information obtained through the baseline program data.

The surveys were written by the Steering Committee in conjunction with the Branch and the Policy Analysis and Research Branch of the Ministry of Education and Training.   All five surveys were pre-tested in delivery centres in Hearst and Scarborough to obtain pre-test feedback from both anglophone and francophone respondents.   The finalized survey questionnaires appear in Appendices 9.1 to 9.5.

The sample sizes for each group were determined by the Steering Committee in consultation with Branch staff and the delivery network.   The samples were intended to achieve a balance between the practical administration of processing data using the limited resources available, and gaining an indicative sample.

The surveys were distributed to all directors/managers and delivery/counselling staff who work directly with the program.   To access academic providers, employers and participants (with whom Branch staff have no direct contact), the Branch worked through delivery organizations themselves.   Centres were asked to compile a list of all academic providers who worked with the FUTURES program in their communities.   These lists were submitted to the Branch and surveys were mailed to each academic provider.

A sampling was made of both employers and participants.   Each delivery organization was asked to develop a random sample of 10 percent of the employers who used the program in the past 12 months.   Randomization was achieved by having centres cite every tenth name on their employer list.   The names and addresses of these employers (the name being that of the direct supervisor of the FUTURES participant), were submitted to the Branch and surveys were distributed directly to them.

Program delivery organizations developed a similar 10 percent random sampling of youth participants.   The population for the sample included participants who had completed the program in the past three months.   To ensure that the privacy of the youth was respected, the Branch mailed these survey questionnaires to the centres, who then distributed them to participants.   The questionnaires were returned directly, by mail, to the Branch.

The surveys were mailed out in December of 1992, and through the use of self-addressed envelopes, were mailed directly back to the Branch.   Respondents were not required to disclose their names.   The surveys were coded so that only regions could be identified.   Regional distinctions were considered important to fully understand survey data.

Survey responses were tabulated, coded and then data entered by staff in the Branch who received appropriate training in the use of the software package SPSS/PC+. All of the data from both the opened and closed-ended responses were checked a second time to ensure accuracy of coding and data entry.

The following is a regional breakdown of the return rates for all surveys.

REGIONAL RESPONSE RATES:

REGION	MAILOUTS	RETURNS	RATE
Participants:			
Northern	108	48	44%
Eastern	103	27	26%
Central	136	53	39%
Western	192	56	29%
Total	**539**	**184**	**34%**
Employers:			
Northern	197	86	44%
Eastern	206	79	38%
Central	447	120	27%
Western	401	176	44%
Total	**1251**	**461**	**37%**
Academic Staff:			
Northern	69	39	57%
Eastern	91	41	45%
Central	103	29	28%
Western	28	16	57%
Total	**291**	**125**	**43%**
Staff:			
Northern	83	47	57%
Eastern	92	51	55%
Central	119	51	43%
Western	78	33	42%
Total	**372**	**182**	**49%**
Director/Manager:			
Northern	15	10	67%
Eastern	20	10	50%
Central	26	14	54%
Western	29	16	55%
Unknown		3	
Total	**90**	**53**	**59%**

2.4   FOCUS GROUPS

Qualitative information was gained through focus group sessions. In each of the four regions of the province, a program delivery centre was chosen to host regional focus group sessions. The centres chosen ensured regional representation, a mix of large and small centres, and community colleges and Youth Employment Counselling Centres. Centres were also chosen to ensure that there was adequate representation of francophones, Aboriginal persons, racial minorities, women, and persons receiving social assistance. The following centres hosted the focus groups: Lambton College of Applied Arts and Technology (Sarnia); Lutherwood Youth Employment Counselling Centre (Kitchener); Kingston Employment and Youth Services (Kingston); Algonquin College of Applied Arts and Technology (Ottawa); Job Opportunities for Youth (Toronto); and Sudbury Youth Employment Services (Sudbury).

From the lists used to obtain the sampling for the surveys (and the lists of surrounding centres where geographically feasible), each host centre randomly selected 10 representative of employers, academic providers, and youth participants who were either nearing completion of their programs or who had completed their programs within the past three months. These representatives were invited to the focus group session held at the centre. Groups of 10 staff and 10 director/managers from each region, randomly selected by Branch personnel, were also invited to focus group sessions.

The questions for these focus groups were written by the Steering Committee, in consultation with Branch staff and the Policy Analysis and Review Branch of the Ministry. In addition, prompts were developed so that topic areas in each of the groups would be similarly covered.

Prior to finalization, a pre-test focus group was conducted within the Branch. Ten consultants and managers were randomly selected to form a focus group which was facilitated in part by each of the four Steering Committee members from the delivery network. Following the session, the Committee obtained feedback from the participants and held a debriefing session to fine-tune the questions and probes used, and to examine the dynamics of facilitating a focus group session. The finalized focus group questions appear in Appendices 9.6 to 9.7.

All sessions were facilitated by a Steering Committee member from the delivery network, and for purposes of continuity, co-facilitated by one of two Branch Steering Committee members. Training sessions for the facilitators helped to maximize consistency and objectivity in the sessions. A Branch consultant attended each focus group in the capacity of notetaker. Immediately following each session, the notes were reviewed by the facilitators to ensure their completeness and accuracy.

The focus groups were conducted in October of 1992.

2.5   FUTURES WORK EXPERIENCE REVIEW WORKING REPORT

The FUTURES Work Experience Review Working Report was distributed to the youth service delivery network in May, 1994. (N.B. This working report contained sections 1.0 to 7.0 of the final report, inclusive.) An initial period of consultation followed, in which FUTURES staff joined their local colleagues, and in many cases Branch consultants and WEP review Steering Committee members, to discuss key findings. This dialogue helped to shape the four two-day regional sessions which were held in June, 1994. FUTURES directors/managers and delivery staff were invited to join the Steering Committee and LEP Branch staff to continue discussions on the key findings and to begin developing action plans to address them. The process which was undertaken, as well as the outcomes of these consultations are detailed in Section 8.0 Next Steps.

> ## 3.0
> ## *LABOUR MARKET CONTEXT FOR YOUTH*

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section examines the context of youth employment programming. The economic environment and labour market demographics describe the labour market confronting today's youth. This section then examines who these youth are. The barriers which this population faces in order to effectively participate in the labour market are evident when youth characteristics are viewed against labour market characteristics. This information provides a broader context within which to review youth employment programming.

3.2 THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The current economic recession has reduced the number of employment opportunities for all. There seems little likelihood of a rapid change to this situation in the next four years. The Conference Board of Canada predicts average employment growth of 108,000 jobs a year (or 2.2 percent) until 1996.[1] Unemployment levels are likely to decline only gradually from 10.7 percent now to 9.6 percent in 1996. The absolute level of employment will not reach its pre-recession peak again until 1995.

Employment growth will be centred in small businesses in the service sectors. Small businesses generate over half of the province's private sector employment growth. Over three-quarters of employment growth will be in the service sectors, particularly in business services and knowledge-based industries.[2]

Compounding the cyclical pressures on the labour market are the structural changes being experienced in Ontario's economy. Labour market and labour force requirements are changing quickly. Fostered by global competition, changing technology and the current recession, employers are demanding more highly and flexibly-skilled workers with a capacity to adapt quickly to new situations. Individuals are finding that they need a broader range of foundation-level skills to be able to take advantage of emerging opportunities to adjust to change. The job market of the 1990s will be characterized by a continued and marked shift of the occupational mix from lower to higher-skilled jobs.[3] To meet the demands of the workplace, the educational attainment and training levels of the labour force will have to improve.

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[1]   Conference Board of Canada, July 1993.

[2]   *An Industrial Policy Framework for Ontario.* Ontario Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology, 1992.

[3]   *Ontario's Labour Market: Long term trends and issues in the 1990s.* Ontario Ministry of Skills Development, 1990; *Success in the Works: A Profile of Canada's Emerging Workforce.* Employment and Immigration Canada, 1989.

Another related development is the rise of contingent and other non-standard employment arrangements. Part-time work, temporary contracts, piece work and other such arrangements become common particularly in recessions; but because of new technologies and stronger competitive pressures this trend may be more structural than it has been in the past.[4] These contingent arrangements clearly will affect approaches to employment and work.

3.3   *YOUTH CHARACTERISTICS*

These economic developments are having a tremendous impact on young people seeking to successfully participate in the current and emerging competitive labour force. Entry-level requirements are becoming increasingly more sophisticated while at the same time a rising proportion of the labour force looking for work is becoming older, with successful work experience and demonstrated skills.

Youth are and will be attempting to enter a labour market that is in the process of significant change. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, while the bulk of the baby-boom was entering the labour force, economic growth was strong, with significant employment growth. Structural economic changes and the lingering effects of the current cyclical downturn have altered the shape and range of opportunities for youth. Managing in the economic environment of the next decades will require more sophistication and flexibility than has been needed in the past.

The youth population aged 15 to 24 in Ontario is approximately 1,380,000. This age group has been declining in size since the early 1980s as the post-war baby-boom has aged. Since 1983 the cohort has declined 12 percent, from 1,550,000. However, the decline in the age cohort has "bottomed-out" and is now stabilizing as the children of baby-boomers themselves age. This "echo boom" means that the number of youth will remain stable around 1.4 million throughout the mid-1990s, then resuming growth, increasing 4 percent through the period 1996 to 2001. As the total population of Ontario will rise at a faster rate over this period, youth as a proportion of the population will continue to decline. In 1991 the population of Ontario was 10.1 million. This is expected to reach 11 million by 1998.[5]

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[4]   *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: Employment in the Service Economy*. Economic Council of Canada, 1990.

[5]   Ontario Ministry of Treasury and Economics, 1993.

Youth share the characteristics of the general population but often in different proportions. For instance, because disabilities increase with old age, while approximately 8 percent of the total population have some disability, about 3 percent of youth report having a disability. Approximately 10 percent of youth are visible minorities though there are significant regional variations. This figure is likely to increase as immigration from Asia, Africa and Latin America continues to be a major source of population growth.[6] Since 1985, the number of immigrants to Ontario has continued to increase. It is projected that immigration will remain at current levels over the coming decade. In 1989, about 363,000 immigrants came to Ontario, of which 23,000 were of school age; 63 percent of this school age group could not speak either English or French.[7]

Approximately 3 percent of youth are Aboriginal and approximately 5 percent are francophone (though those proportions are higher in Northern and, in the case of francophones, Eastern Ontario). Over the last 10 years, immigrant adults aged 18 to 24 made up the largest group of those moving into Metro Toronto. Forty-nine percent of youth are female.[8]

For the disadvantaged among the youth population, competing in the current and emerging labour market is even more difficult. A significant proportion of this sector of the youth population lack the basic skills necessary to succeed in employment and training. They have little or no work experience. Generally, they display low self-esteem and confidence, poor social skills and may not relate well to authority.[9] The majority of disadvantaged youth have dropped out of the formal school system, having attained a Grade 10 level of education or less. Many have extremely low literacy and numeracy skills: roughly 20 percent of the out-of-school population in Ontario are illiterate or functionally illiterate. Statistically, youth dropouts are more likely to be unemployed, and much more likely to depend on social assistance.[10] It is not surprising that many of these youth, after having failed in the school system,[11] also have failed in the labour market.

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[6]   *Success in the Works, op. cit..*

[7]   Ontario Ministry of Treasury and Economics, 1993.

[8]   *Ibid..*

[9]   See *Young, Out of School, Jobless, Troubled*, Hay Management Consultants, 1988.

[10]   *Leaving School*, Human Resources and Labour Canada, 1993; *Out of School Youth in Ontario: Their Labour Market Experience*, Ministry of Skills Development, 1987.

[11]   It should be noted that not all early school leavers had <u>academic</u> difficulties at school. See *Leaving School, op. cit.*, and "Qualitative Research on School Leavers," Price Waterhouse, prepared for Statistics Canada, December 1990.

It has been estimated that roughly 30 percent of youth do not finish secondary school without interruption. While a greater percentage of youth have a secondary school education than in past generations, such a diploma is increasingly considered the minimum standard for entry level positions. A higher proportion of youth are staying in school longer: 83 percent of the 16 to 18 year old age group were in school in 1990/1 as compared to 70 percent in 1980/1. Also increasing is the number of students who return to school after short or long term absences from their studies. Nonetheless, a recent survey found that 17 percent of 20 year olds in Ontario had not finished secondary school. These early school leavers were disproportionately male. Canada-wide data showed that almost two-thirds of these youth had completed less than Grade 11 before leaving school.[12]

Many employment-disadvantaged youth require assistance in meeting basic needs such as housing, food, financial support, and child care which must be addressed before they can consider employment. Many lack the type of support network usually provided by family or community. Some in this group require assistance overcoming problems associated with physical or mental disabilities. They may be physically disabled, learning disabled, developmentally handicapped or recently released from institutional settings. Some have criminal histories. Others suffer from psychiatric and/or emotional problems.

Labour market information clearly indicates that visible minority youth have not had equitable access to the labour market, and that certain groups of visible minority youth have lower rates of labour market participation than the youth population as a whole.[13] Language, lack of Canadian work experience, and pervasive systemic discrimination are all major barriers for this group.

In their evaluation report of the FUTURES Pre-Employment Preparation program in 1988, Hay Management Consultants found that the size of the disadvantaged youth population is relatively stable and would not be diminished given changing labour market requirements. While the report found that there was a level beneath which the disadvantaged population would not drop, it did not preclude that the population could increase given an increase in hard economic times or increases in the minimum skill levels demanded by the labour market.

Unemployment itself creates serious and far-reaching disadvantages. As described in Young, Out of School, Jobless, Troubled,

> ...The effects of unemployment are both personal and social. Unemployment has been linked to lower self-esteem, alienation, poorer health, mental illness, family problems including child abuse, drug and alcohol abuse and criminal behaviour... There is evidence that school leaving combined with unemployment are highly related to drug abuse, suicide, vandalism and violent crimes. Unemployed youth are likely to feel bored, with no clear goals or sense of purpose. Self-esteem often quickly evaporates, to be replaced by feelings of humiliation."

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[12]   *Leaving School, op. cit..*

[13]   Hill Sloan Associates, "Visible Minority Youth Employment and Training Policies," prepared for the Child Youth and Family Policy Research Centre, October 1989.

A variety of psychological and financial insecurities arise and can be expressed by anger and resentment of themselves, parents, teachers, employers, government, etc.[14]

In addition to the personal and social effects of unemployment, there is also a significant fiscal impact on society. Youth unemployment increases social welfare, health, education and law enforcement costs. It also has a clear economic cost in terms of lost productivity and dissipated recruitment and training costs as firms hire youth who move through a succession of trial jobs in search of their niche in the labour force.

In times of greater need and economic slow-down this disadvantaged youth group has traditionally been the first to feel the pressure. As the labour market becomes flooded with more skilled and experienced workers and jobs become scarce, these youth are rapidly squeezed out of the competitive job market, are over-represented in the under-educated group who compete for low skill, low paying jobs, and have trouble accessing mainstream training programs.

3.4 THE LABOUR MARKET TRAINING AND ADJUSTMENT CONTEXT

There are a broad range of programs and services designed to meet these needs of youth. A great number of the major institutional service providers are currently undergoing significant change.

The education system in Ontario is the subject of much debate and review. The Royal Commission on Learning has been appointed to review the system and make recommendations for improvement. The education system is a crucial factor in the labour market success of young people, and a key partner in the labour market training system.

Major reform of the social assistance system is being undertaken to more closely integrate the income support provisions with access to training and re-employment efforts. JOB LINK, as one piece of the revised social assistance system, is being designed to build training and employment development into the social assistance system. This development reflects the growing recognition of the importance of education and training to individual self-realization and to reducing dependence on government income support.

The training and adjustment system in Ontario is itself going through significant evolution with the establishment of the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board (OTAB) in October 1993. OTAB now administers the majority of provincial labour market training and adjustment programs, including apprenticeship programs. This shift of decision-making to the consumers of training, in conjunction with new local boards and possibly a revised federal-provincial relationship in the field, indicate the depth of change that labour market training and adjustment has experienced in the last 10 years.

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[14] *Op. cit.*, pp.9-10.

In 1993/94, the Learning and Employment Preparation Branch sponsored a province-wide consultation with youth and youth advocates. Although the consultation had a fairly broad, comprehensive scope covering employment and education issues, a number of conclusions and recommendations are very similar to the findings of the WEP review.

Some of the key themes and recommendations include:

- the need for programs that combine education and on-the-job training;

- coordination of services in the community;

- focus on life skills, confidence building and work adjustment;

- the need for career planning and employment/vocational counselling;

- the need for supports such as daycare, transportation, accommodation for disabled youth and mobile services to rural communities; and

- employer contributions through training, financial support, or hiring at the end of the program.

Both federal and provincial levels of government fund a range of youth employment programs, services and other initiatives designed to meet a variety of objectives. These programs can be classed as two principal groups: i) those that focus on the creation of employment opportunities for youth; and ii) those that focus on improving the employability of youth. Programs can be a mix of both, but tend to have one primary focus.

The majority of employment opportunity programs for youth operate during the summer. Provincial programs of this type are Summer Experience Program (SEP), Environmental Youth Corps (EYC), Northern Ontario Training Opportunities (NORTOP), and jobsOntario Youth (JOY). Provincial summer employment programs created approximately 27,000 positions in 1993, at a cost of $57.6 million. Federal government activity in summer employment in Ontario has been focused on administration of Canada Employment Centres for Students, Summer Employment Experience Development (SEED) and Career Opportunity Summer Employment Program (COSEP). The federal government has recently announced a number of initiatives, including the creation of a Canadian Youth Service Corps, and Skills Internships. Exactly how these initiatives will operate is still being developed.

Programs focusing on improving the long-term employability of youth normally operate year-round. The major youth programs in Ontario are FUTURES and Youth Employment Counselling Centres (YECC). Also, jobsOntario Training, while not youth specific, has a target of 18 percent youth participation, and so serves a significant number of youth among its participants. The Ministry of Community and Social Services also administers the FUTURES Residential component, and the Preparation for Independence and Community Youth Supports programs which are prevention programs designed to assist youth to prepare for independence rather than to train them specifically for employment.

FUTURES is the single largest intervention for employment disadvantaged youth in Ontario, both in terms of expenditure and points of access. The program fills a very large role in the spectrum of youth employment programming. Launched in late 1985, FUTURES was designed to provide job-ready youth with work experience as a transition into the labour force. Given the present and anticipated economic and labour market context, it is necessary to examine whether the FUTURES Work Experience Program design is still relevant to youth participant needs and to workforce demands.

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4.1   INTRODUCTION

In order to understand FUTURES and the WEP component, it is important to place them in historical context. The following section provides a description of WEP as it currently exists and provides an historical perspective of the origins and development of the program over the past nine years. Finally, using statistics submitted by delivery agents, this section reviews baseline program data from 1986/87 to the present in order to highlight trends and other developments.

4.2   CURRENT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The objective of the FUTURES program is "to assist unemployed and employment disadvantaged youth, aged 16 to 24 (up to age 29 for people with a disability), make a successful transition to the competitive labour market. This is done through a combination of counselling, both individual and group, skills and educational upgrading and work experience." FUTURES is currently delivered by 56 Youth Employment Counselling Centres (YECCs) and 23 community colleges (of Applied Arts and Technology) across the province.

The program has two components: Pre-Employment Preparation (PEP) and Work Experience (WEP). PEP serves youth who are not job-ready, providing: an intensive, structured intervention; individualized vocational counselling and planning to improve job search, job maintenance and life skills; and an orientation to life-long learning before participating in the labour market.

The WEP component, the subject of the current review, was originally designed for youth who are prepared for on-the-job training and work experience. FUTURES attempts to provide placements that match job or career aspirations of its participants, enhance their employability and ultimately lead to full-time employment. The Basic and Enhanced Training options provide work experience and on-the-job training only. The other two options, Guarantee and Part-Time Work/Part-Time School, provide an opportunity for educational upgrading to achieve secondary school credits in addition to on-the-job training and work experience. Work Experience participants receive the provincial minimum wage while on placement and may be eligible for additional financial assistance for child-care and employment-related expenses. The four options are:

Basic 16-Week (Basic) - provides up to 16 weeks of full-time work experience and on-the-job training or up to 32 weeks of part-time work experience and on-the-job training. Participants also may receive financial assistance for employment related expenses.

Enhanced Training (Enhanced) - provides an opportunity to extend the Basic 16-week full-time option for an additional 10 weeks conditional on the employer committing to a more extensive training plan including off-site training which will provide the participant with a higher skill level for subsequent employment, either with the training employer or elsewhere.

One Year Guarantee (GO) - Participants lacking a Grade 12 secondary school diploma are guaranteed work experience placements for up to one year in return for committing themselves to a program of educational upgrading for a minimum of three hours per week on their own time. Participants must complete at least one credit during the 52 weeks toward an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

Part-Time Work/Part-Time School (PT/PT) - provides participants lacking a Grade 12 secondary school diploma with part-time work experience placements for up to one year if they agree to undertake part-time educational upgrading and complete a minimum of three courses. The three courses must be credit courses towards their Secondary School Graduation Diploma. Participants receive the provincial minimum wage for their part-time work hours and a stipend of $100 per week for their part-time school hours. The Part-time Work/Part-Time School option of the FUTURES program was introduced in July of 1987.

Eligibility - To be eligible to participate in FUTURES, the applicant must be:

1) a resident of Ontario; and
2) eligible to work in Canada; and
3) fall into one of the following categories:

Graduate - Youth, aged 16 to 24, with a Grade 12 diploma or better who face no identifiable barriers to employment, but who have been out of school for 20 weeks and unemployed for 20 consecutive weeks.

Employment Disadvantaged Youth - Youth, aged 16 to 24, without a Grade 12 diploma or with other barriers to employment, and who have been out of school for 12 weeks and unemployed for 12 consecutive weeks; or for non-graduates only, have 16 weeks of accumulated unemployment over the preceding 12 months which includes four consecutive weeks of unemployment immediately prior to their application.

Severely Employment Disadvantaged Youth - Youth, aged 16-24, without a Grade 12 diploma and with other significant employment barriers such that they would not succeed if placed directly into a workplace setting without prior assistance, and who have been out of school for 12 weeks and either:

-   unemployed for 12 consecutive weeks; or
-   have 16 weeks of accumulated unemployment over the preceding 12 months which includes four consecutive weeks of unemployment immediately prior to their application.

Disabled - Employable persons, aged 16 to 29, regardless of educational level. who have a disability as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code and who have been out of school for 12 weeks and either:

- unemployed for 12 consecutive weeks; or
- have 16 weeks of accumulated unemployment over the preceding 12 months which included four consecutive weeks of unemployment immediately prior to their application.

Early School Leaver - Youth, aged 14 and 15, who are referred to the program by the Chair of the Committee for Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils (S.A.L.E.P.) of a local Board of Education. In such cases, the "out of school" and "unemployed" criteria can be waived.

4.3 HISTORICAL PROGRAM PERSPECTIVE

Following concern about high youth unemployment in the early 1980s, the Ontario government established a number of youth employment programs to provide job opportunities for youth. These programs included funding of YECCs and a number of programs delivered through community colleges.

The FUTURES program was established by the Ministry of Skills Development in November of 1985 to consolidate and replace six government youth programs (Youth Works, Youth Corps, Ontario Career Action Program, Youth Tourism, Youth Start and Residential Centres). The intent of this consolidation was to eliminate the gaps, inconsistencies and duplications which existed, while maintaining a consistent level of service to youth. From the outset, the FUTURES program was delivered through community colleges and many of the YECCs.

The WEP component of FUTURES was initially designed to meet the needs of all youth. The program served a job creation function, particularly for those without barriers to employment, other than inexperience. As well, the program provided training and support to a core group of young people who faced significant barriers to employment.

In 1987, a number of changes were made to the program to address youth needs. A Part-Time Work/Part-Time School option was introduced to the program to provide more flexibility in serving youth who required educational upgrading to achieve their secondary school diploma. In addition, eligibility requirements were amended to allow youth who had experienced significant periods of unemployment over the past year to qualify for the program.

By 1989, youth unemployment was at an historic low, reaching a low of 6.5 percent. At the same time, labour shortages were developing in practically all sectors of the economy. The "job creation" function of the subsidized work placement was increasingly unnecessary in order to help those participants with few barriers to employment attain work experience.

However, the development of labour shortages highlighted existing mismatches between skills of the labour pool and those demanded by businesses and industries. It was recognized that the economy was going to continue to require higher skill levels in the future and individuals would need to be able to keep pace with these developments. In light of these factors, the program orientation shifted to emphasize employability skills, with an increased focus on service to the more employment-disadvantaged youth, and on training and education outcomes, recognizing that success is dependent on connections to life-long learning.

A significant step to accomplishing this re-orientation was the renewal of the Pre-Employment Preparation (PEP) component of FUTURES. Building on the findings of a program review conducted in 1988, a committee of Ministry staff and program deliverers developed a model for a renewed PEP component. A major shift from educational upgrading to employability skills and vocational planning was undertaken. A second committee designed the actual revised program and support materials, bringing the model to implementation in 1992. The renewed PEP is more flexible and participant driven, and was designed to facilitate inter-agency collaboration and co-operation in program delivery.

In 1989, the government reorganized training programs, making a distinction between preparatory programming and work place training. As a result, the responsibility for FUTURES, and other programs dealing with "basic employment preparation and access" were transferred to the Ministry of Education and Training. This transfer recognized that the program served participant needs beyond those immediately related to employment. The Ontario Training and Adjustment Board (OTAB), established in October 1993, embodies this new broad thinking about employment preparation and training needs. The Entry/Re-Entry program area, into which FUTURES has been transferred, is a collection of programs reflecting this approach.

4.4   BASELINE PROGRAM DATA

The following section reviews trends and other developments in programming from 1986/87 to the present, using statistical data collected by delivery agents.[1] There have been a number of changes in statistical reporting over this period, resulting in some interruptions in the data. Nonetheless, clear trends do emerge. The history of the program can be divided into two periods: a period of program growth in a context of economic growth from inception of the program in 1985 to 1988/89; and a period, from 1989 to the present, of more constrained program resources and dramatic decline in youth employment. The program has had to respond to these changes to program funding within a context of significantly increased participant need.

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[1]   1986/87 was the first full-fiscal year of standardized data collection. However, FUTURES amalgamated a number of different programs and a significant proportion of participants in these prior programs carried over into 1986/87. Thus data for fiscal 1986/87 are distorted somewhat by this transition.

a)   Overview

Participation in the WEP component is shown in Figure 1. As was discussed above, in 1988/89, within a context of low youth unemployment, program orientation shifted to emphasize employability skills, with an increased focus on service to the more employment-disadvantaged youth, and on training and education outcomes, recognizing that success is dependent on connections to life-long learning.   This refocusing of program emphasis was accompanied by a reduction in the capacity of the program. Program expenditures, shown in Figure 2, were therefore lower, and this continued into 1989/90. Over this two year period, participation decreased 28 percent, from 28,500 to 20,600. Expenditures dropped from $72 million to $60 million, a reduction of 17 percent. Expenditure per participant increased 15 percent, with stipend and operating costs per participant increasing roughly equally.

Figure 1: FUTURES Work Experience Participation
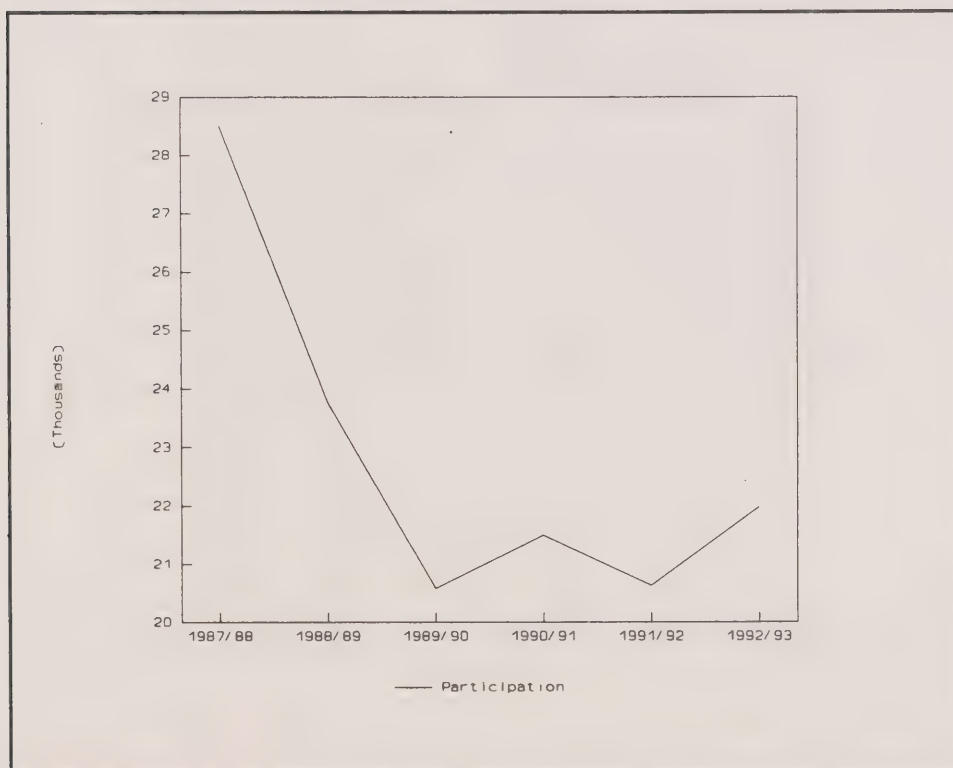
Figure 2: FUTURES WE Expenditures
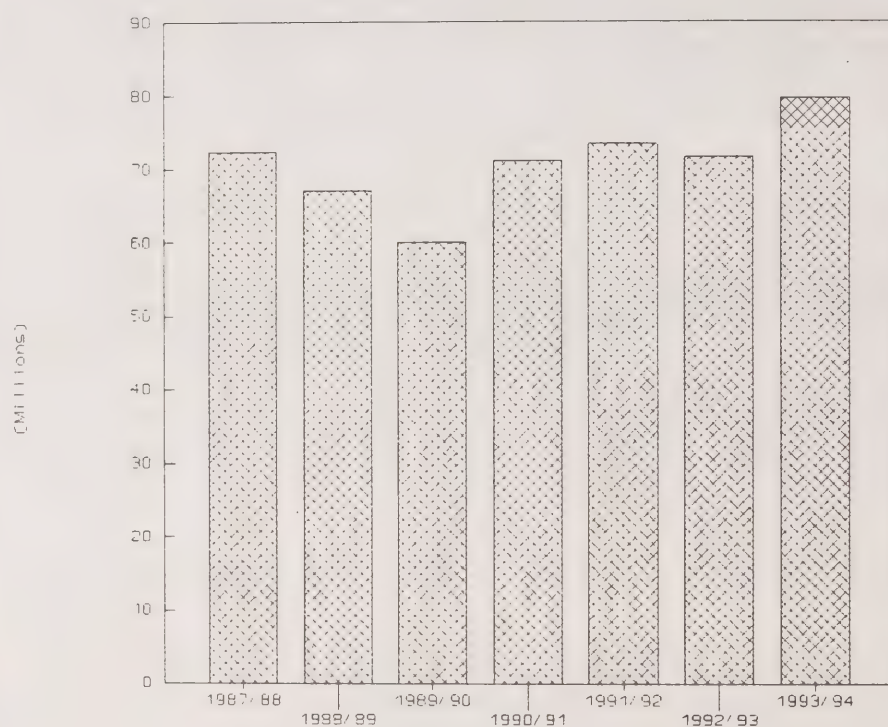
In 1990/91, in response to a dramatic rise in youth unemployment, there was a $10 million increase in stipend expenditure, an increase of 24%. In addition to increasing the capacity of the program, this increase supported longer durations for participants. Stipend expenditure per participant rose 18%, from $2,020 to $2,400. Since this peak in 1990/91, stipend expenditures per participant have dropped to their lowest level ever in real terms, (i.e. correcting for increases in the minimum wage). Figure 3 shows the number of minimum wage hours that could be purchased with the stipend expenditure per participant. The decreased number of hours that can be supported must be balanced against increased benefit of a higher wage rate.

Figure 3: Minimum Wage Hour
Equivalent of Stipend
Expenditure per Participant
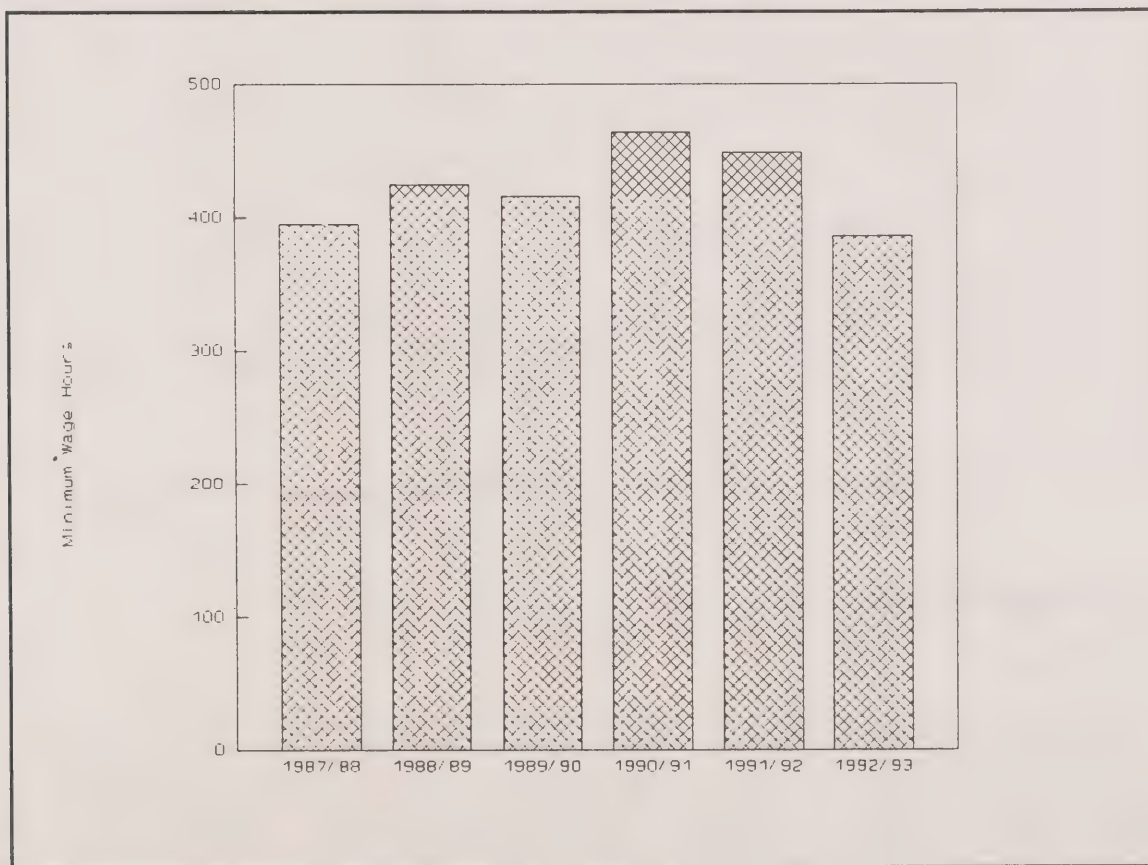
Over the same period, there has been a shift from using the longer duration GO and PT/PT options, to increased use of the Basic option. Figure 4 shows these trends in use of options.

Figure 4: Option Mix
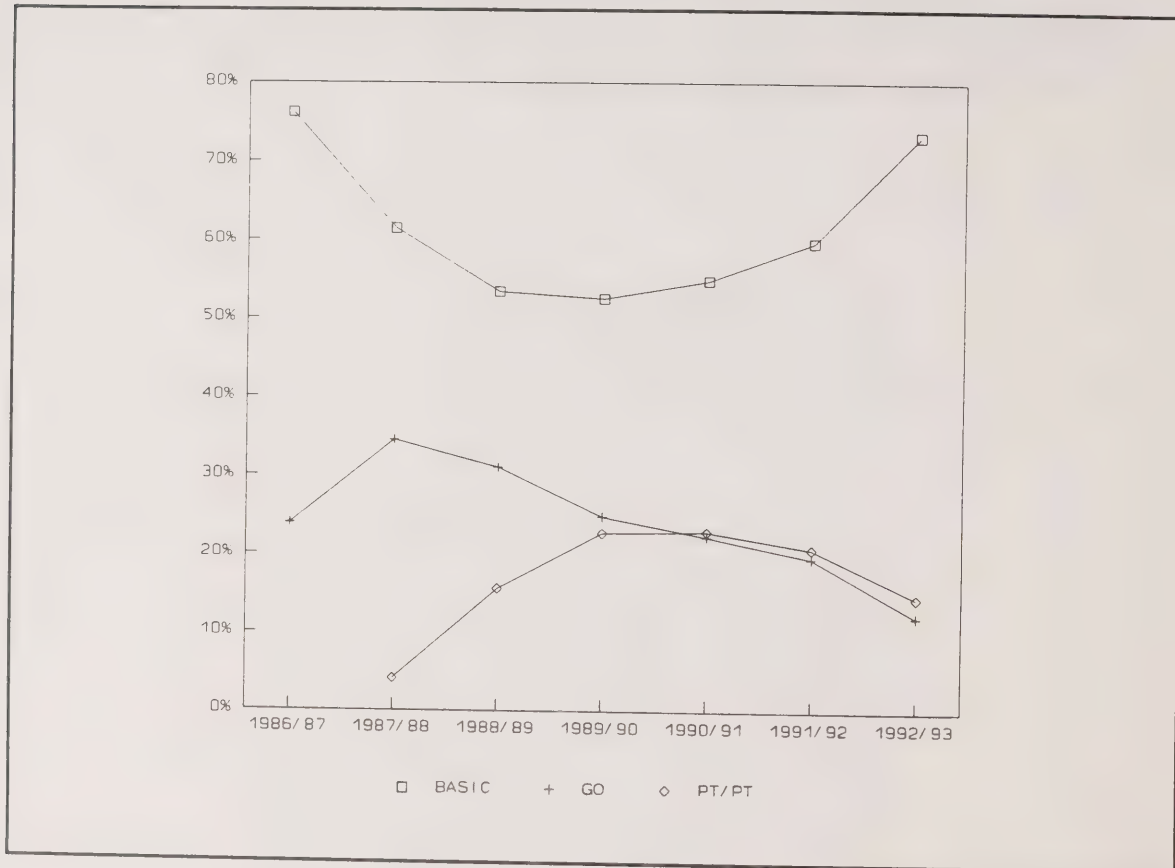
b)   **Participant Profiles**

i)   **Age**

In the period 1986/87 to 1989/90, the age distribution of participants remained relatively steady at between 43 to 44 percent aged 16 to 19, with 53 to 54 percent aged 20 to 24. Over that period, youth under 16 served through Board of Education authorized Supervised Alternative Learning for Excused Pupils (S.A.L.E.P.), increased to 2 percent of participants; and youth aged 25 to 29, eligible under special youth with disabilities provisions, came to account for 2.5 percent of the program.   Since 1989, the program has served a greater proportion of youth aged 20 to 24, and proportionately fewer youth under age 16 and over age 25. In 1992/93, the age distribution of participants was as follows: aged 14 to 15, 1.3 percent; aged 16 to 19, 33.2 percent; aged 20 to 24, 63.7 percent; and aged 25 to 29, 1.7 percent.

ii)   Education

A similar pattern emerges with the education level of participants. Until 1990/91, the trend had been to serve a greater proportion of participants with lower levels of education. The proportion of graduates served declined from 31 percent in 1987/88 to 22 percent in 1990/91. The proportion of participants who had not finished secondary school rose from 59 percent to 67 percent in the same period. However, since then, the proportion of participants who are graduates had risen to 29 percent in 1992/93, and the proportion without a secondary school diploma had fallen to 56.8 percent.   Figure 5 shows these trends.

Figure 5: Education Levels
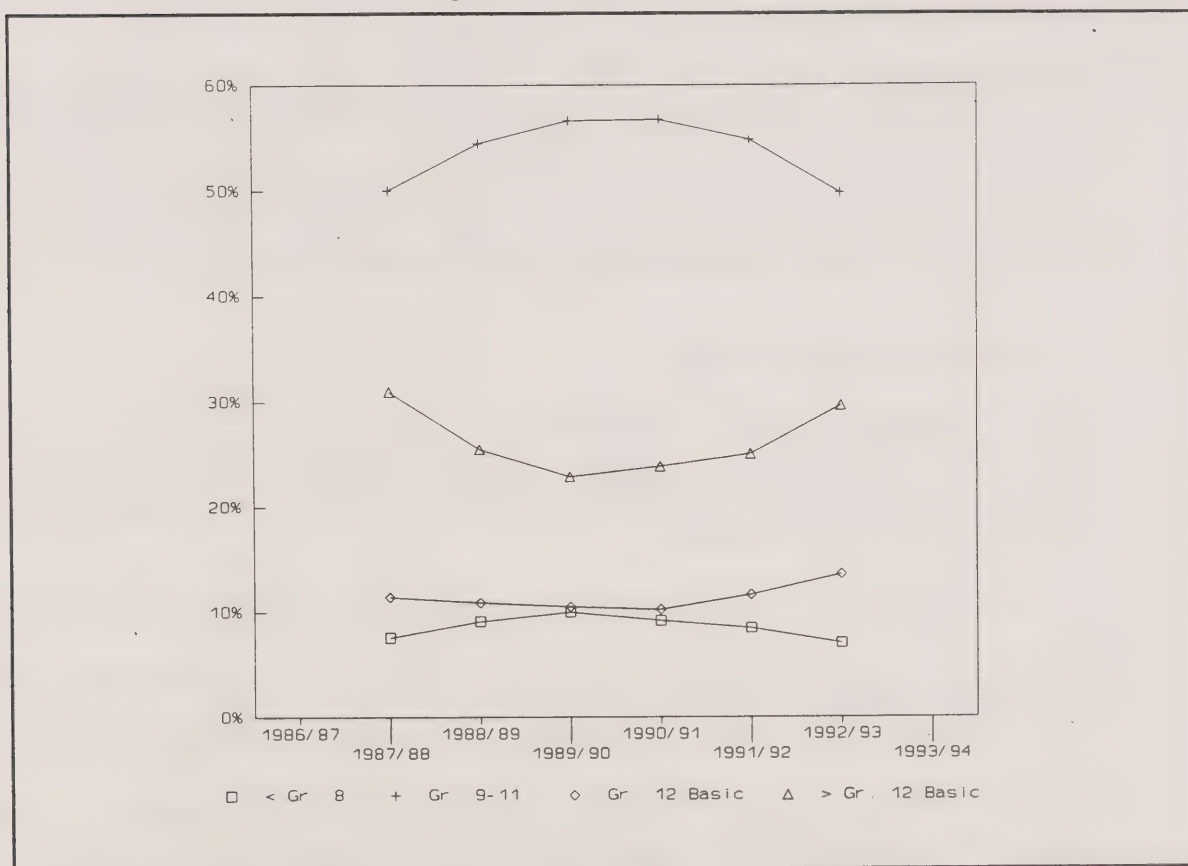
There are significant differences in educational levels in the different options. Ninety-five percent of participants in the Guarantee and PT/PT options have less than a Grade 12 education, as is required by the program guidelines. In 1992/93, a greater proportion of participants with lowest levels of education -- less than Grade 8 -- participated in the Guarantee option (20 percent) than in the PT/PT option (12 percent). The data for 1992/93 show that 68 percent of participants with less than a Grade 8 education were in the Basic option (which represents 78 percent of WEP participation), while 54 percent of participants in the Basic option have Grade 12 Basic or more.

iii) Source of Referral

The proportion of participants who come to the program through self-referral, or through the referral of friends or family has increased significantly over the past six years, from 29 percent in 1986/87 to 61 percent in 1992/93. Referrals from provincial and municipal social services have increased from 6.4 percent of participants in 1986/87 to 9.4 percent in 1992/93.

In the early years of the program 16-17 percent of participants reported being referred by an employer. This proportion has declined such that employer referrals accounted for 8.4 percent of participants in 1992/93.

iv) Source of Income

Service to persons receiving social assistance, including dependents of recipients, has increased from 16.5 percent of participants in 1986/87 to 33.6 percent in 1992/93. The educational upgrading options were used for many persons receiving social assistance. In 1992/93, 46 percent of participants in the PT/PT option were persons receiving social assistance. Data on 1993/94 to date indicate that 50 percent of PT/PT participants this year and 42 percent of GO option participants are persons receiving social assistance.

v) Employment Equity Groups

With the exception of service to racial minority youth, service to employment equity groups follows the two-phase pattern discussed above.   Figure 6 shows the representation of employment equity groups (except women) among participants. Figure 7 shows the participation of women.

Francophone representation has held fairly steady at 7-8 percent of total participation.

Service to youth with disbilities had held steady at roughly 7 percent until 1989/90. Since then it has dropped to 3.1 percent. Service to aboriginal youth follows a similar pattern, rising to 6.9 percent of participation in 1989/90, but dropping to 4.7 percent in 1992/93.

The program has succeeded in serving a significantly increased proportion of racial minority youth, specifically black youth. Service has increased from 9.1 percent in 1987/88 to over 20 percent in 1992/93 and over 23 percent in 1993/94 to date. No race-specific data were collected from deliverers in 1991/92 and 1992/93, but representation by Black youth has increased from 3.3 percent in 1987/88 to 15.9 percent in 1993/94 to date.   In contrast, representation of South Asian, East/Southeast Asian and West Asian/Arab youth appears not to have increased.

Prior to 1990/91, women represented roughly 55 percent of participants. Representation has since declined to 43 percent.

vi) Residence Type

Though no data have been collected since 1990/91, historically over half of participants lived with their parents, relatives or guardian. Another third of participants lived on their own or with their spouse. Participants living in group or foster homes, or in residential centres made up two to three percent. Less than one percent of youth had no fixed address. Less than one percent of participants reported living in a residential centre despite the fact $2.5 million in funding is provided to these centres through the FUTURES program.

Figure 6: Participation of
Employment Equity Groups
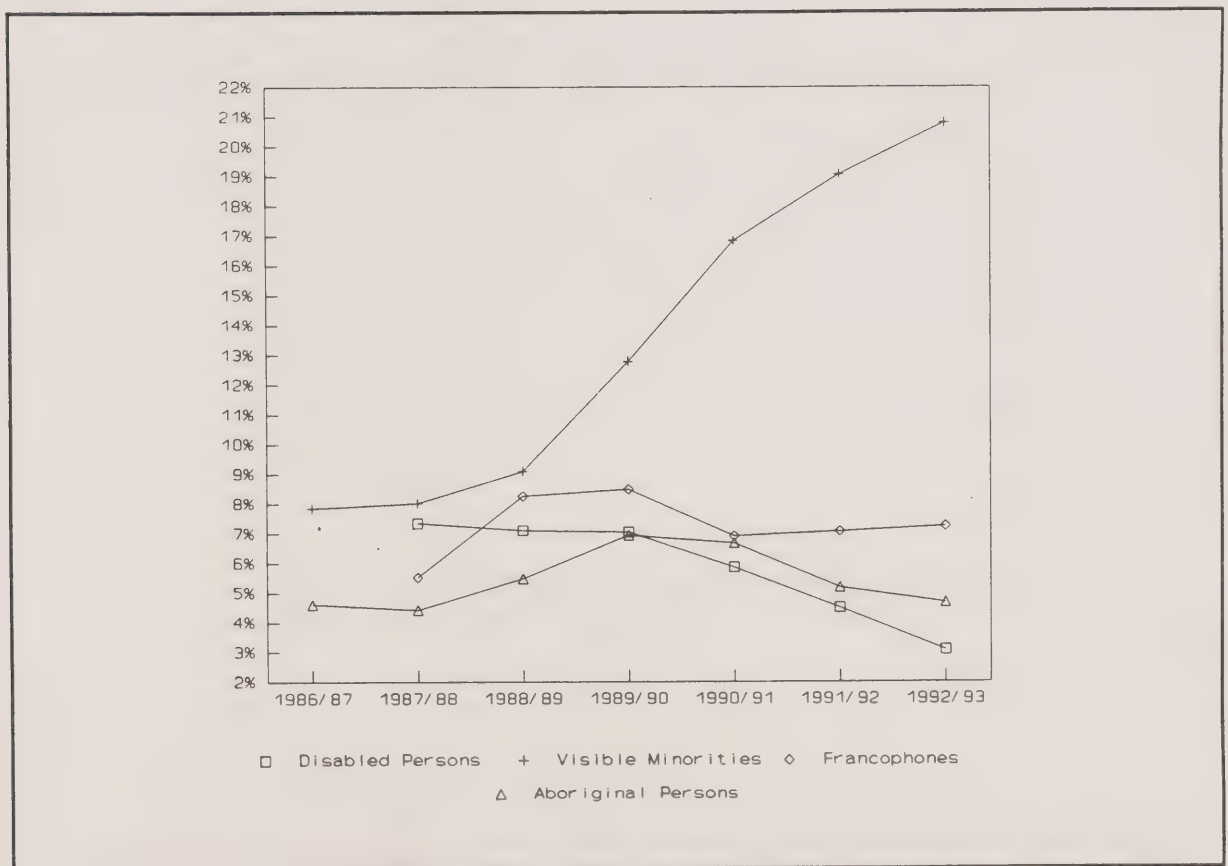
Figure 7: Participation of
Women
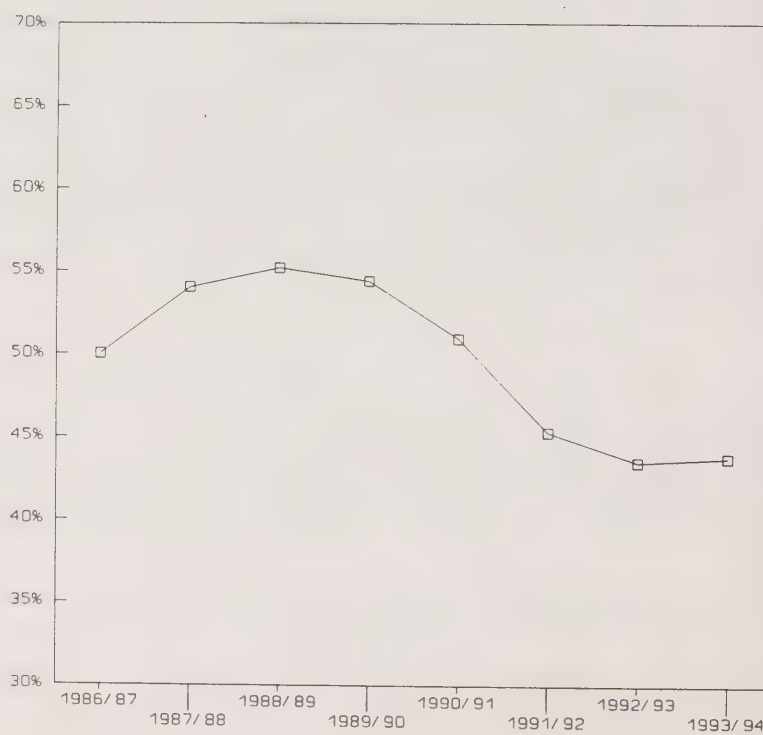
c)   Outcomes

Figure 8 shows the proportion of participants who were either employed, in school or unemployed as they exited the program. From a high of 46 percent employed at exit in 1988/89, that proportion has dropped to 36 percent in 1992/93. Year-to-date data for 1993/1994 suggest that the decline may have stopped. A significant shift has been the increase in participants returning to school moving from less than 5 percent in 1986/87 to almost 14 percent in 1992/93.

Exit outcomes vary from option to option. Figures 9 through 12 show the outcomes at exit from each option, and for all exits, for 1993/94 year-to-date (April to December). At exit, employment outcomes are highest in the Basic option, around 40 percent in 1992/93; at the same time unemployment outcomes are also highest in the Basic option at 31 percent. At exit, education outcomes are highest in the PT/PT option, at 24 percent in 1992/93. In the GO option, however, eduction outcomes at exit were 13.5 percent in 1992/93, only a little above the 11.7 percent level in the Basic option.

Figure 8: Outcomes at Exit
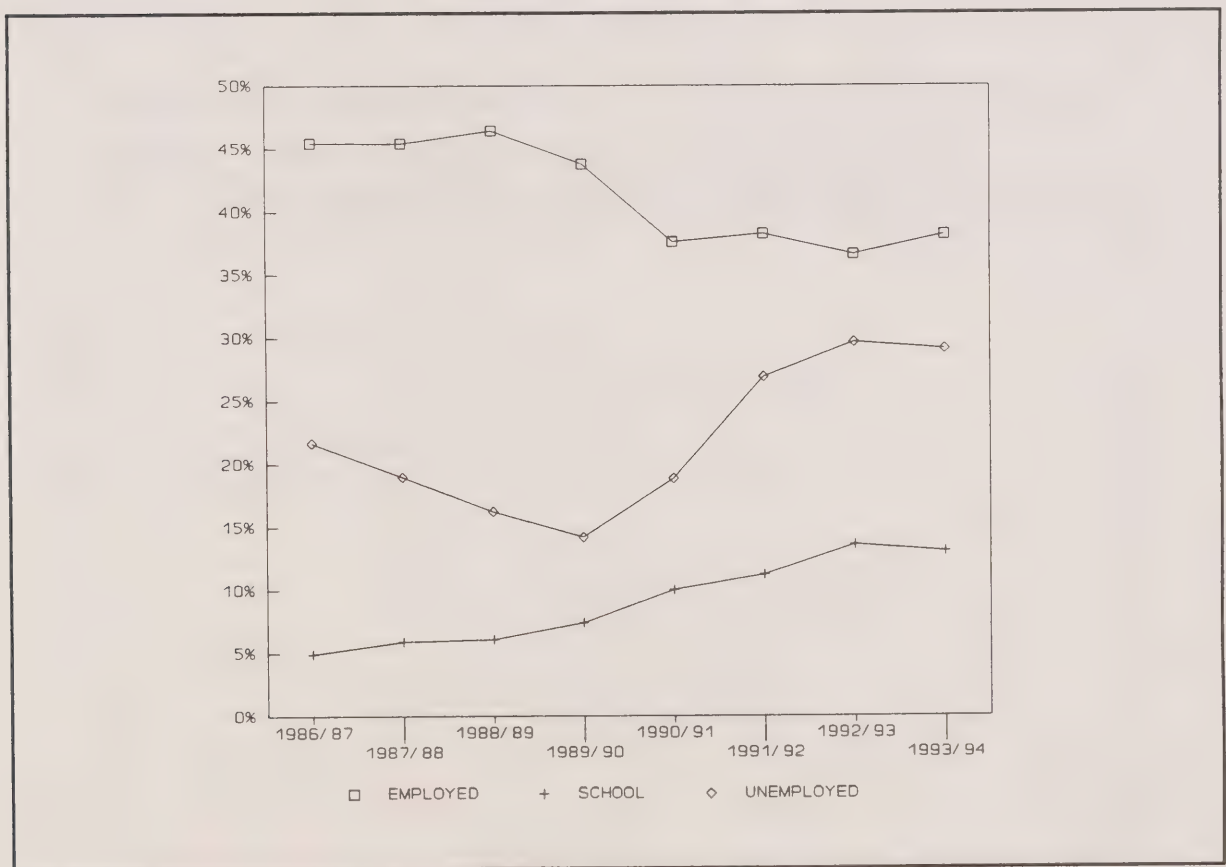
Figure 9: Basic Option -- Outcomes at Exit, 1993/94 YTD

Not Available/Lost Contact (6 0%)

Unemployment (29 9%)

Employment (40 6%)

Other Agency Involvement (3 9%)

Training (7 4%)

Education (12 2%)
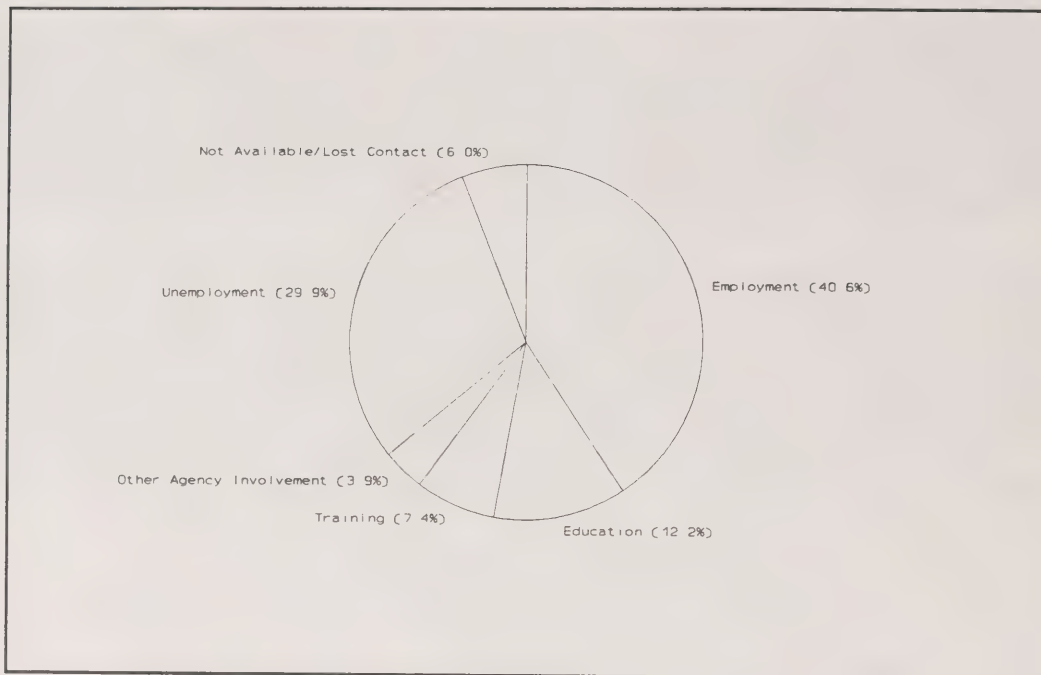
Figure 10:   Guarantee Option -- Outcomes at Exit, 1993/94 YTD

Not Available/Lost Contact (13 7%)

Employment (29 7%)

Unemployment (29 8%)

Education (13 1%)

Other Agency Involvement (4 7%)

Training (9 0%)
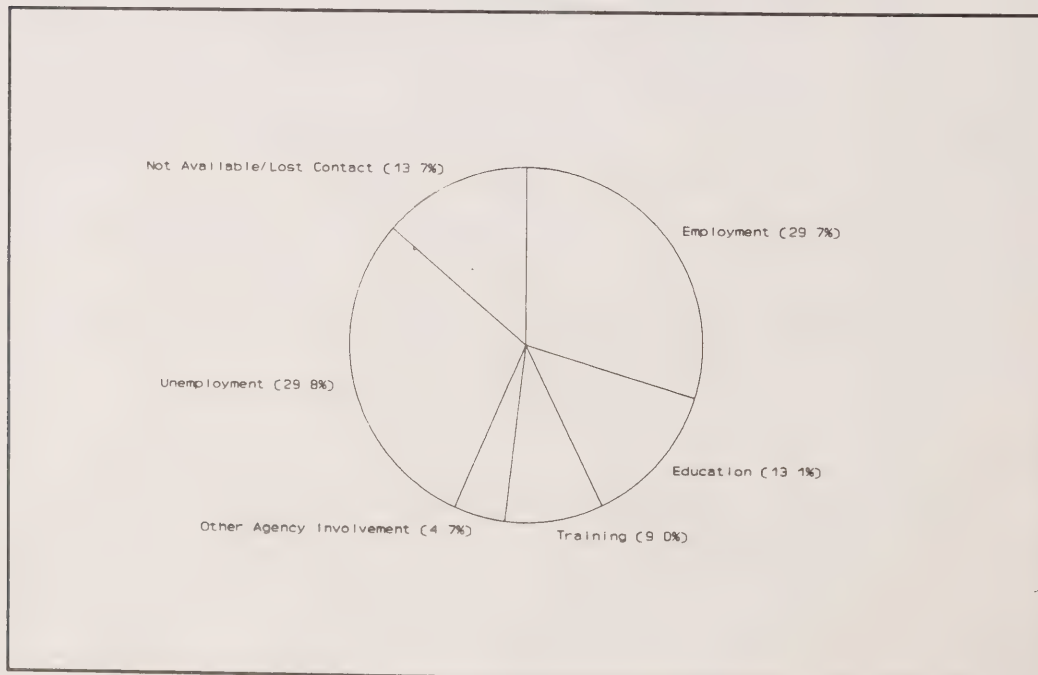
Figure 11:   Part-Time/Part-Time Option -- Outcomes at Exit, 1993/94 YTD

Not Available/Lost Contact (11 7%)

Employment (27 7%)

Unemployment (22 0%)

Other Agency Involvement (5 1%)

Education (20 3%)

Training (13 2%)
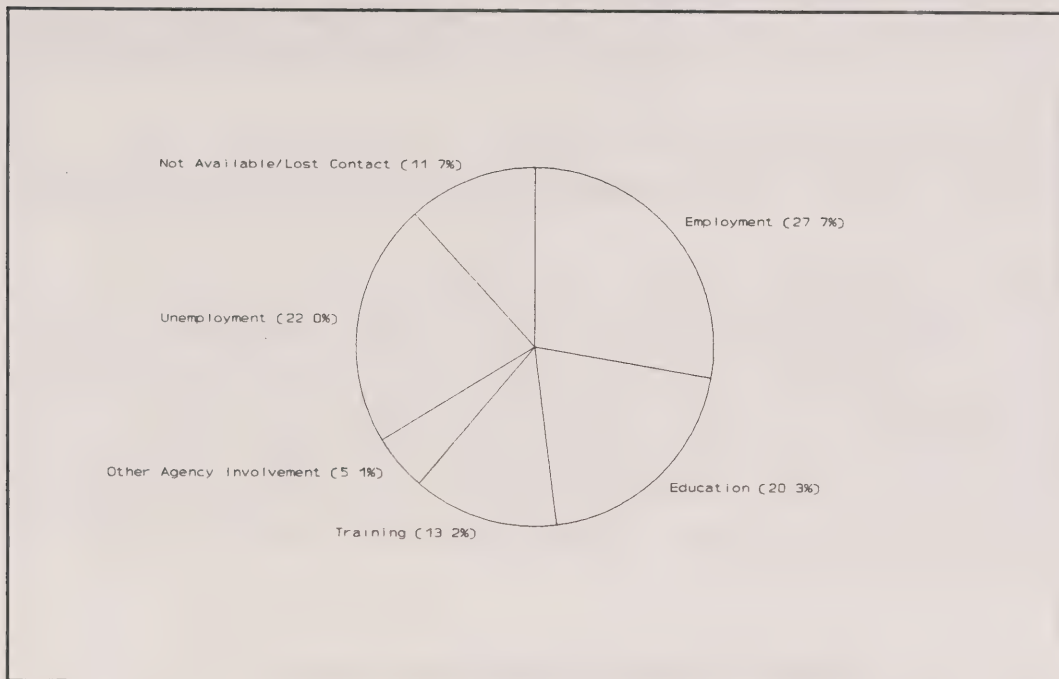
Figure 12:   WEP (All Options) - Outcomes at Exit, 1993/94 YTD

Not Available/Lost Contact (7.4%)

Employment (38 2%)

Unemployment (29 1%)

Other Agency Involvement (4 1%)

Training (8 1%)
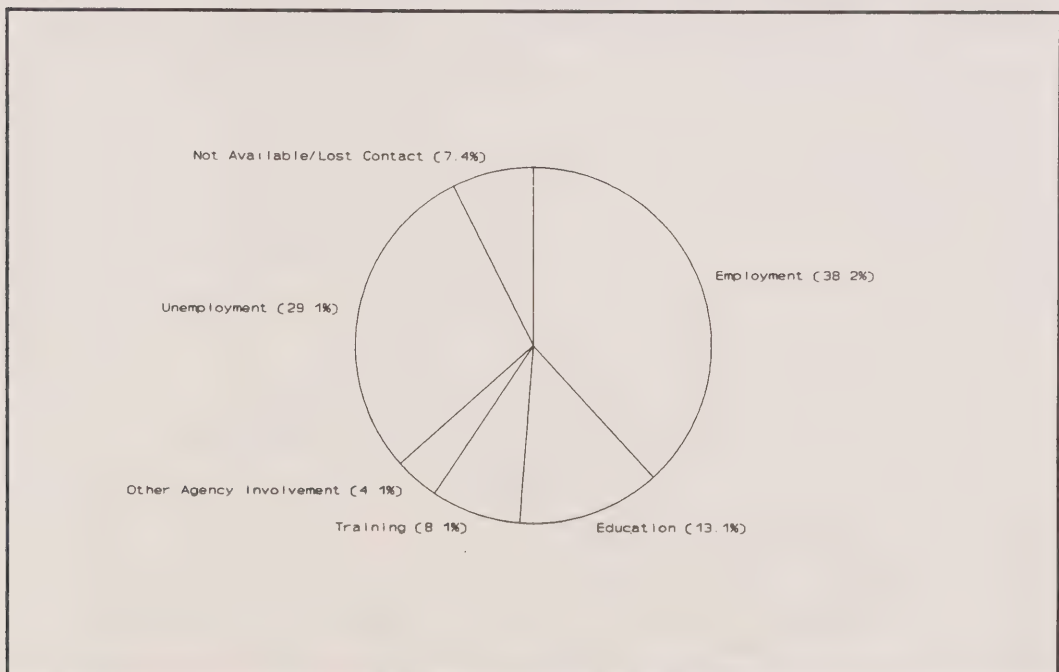
Education (13 1%)

The GO option has lower employment outcomes at exit than the Basic option, 28 percent compared to 40 percent in 1992/93, and only slightly higher education outcomes at exit than the Basic option. Thirty percent of GO and Basic participants are unemployed at exit.

The PT/PT option has the lowest proportion of unemployment outcomes at exit: 23 percent in 1992/93. Twenty-six percent of participants in this option were employed at exit.

Figure 13 shows the proportion of participants who were employed, in school or unemployed three months after completing the program. These figures follow the same patterns as the exit outcome statistics. As compared with outcomes at exit, employment levels are a little higher, but returns to school increase notably. Whereas 14 percent of participants were in education at exit, three months later 18 percent of participants have returned to school. At the same time, unemployment outcomes drop from 30 percent to 21 percent at the three month follow-up. Figures 14 through 17 show the status of former participants three months after exiting each option, and for all options for 1993/94 year-to-date (April to December).

Figure 13: Status at Three-Month Follow-up
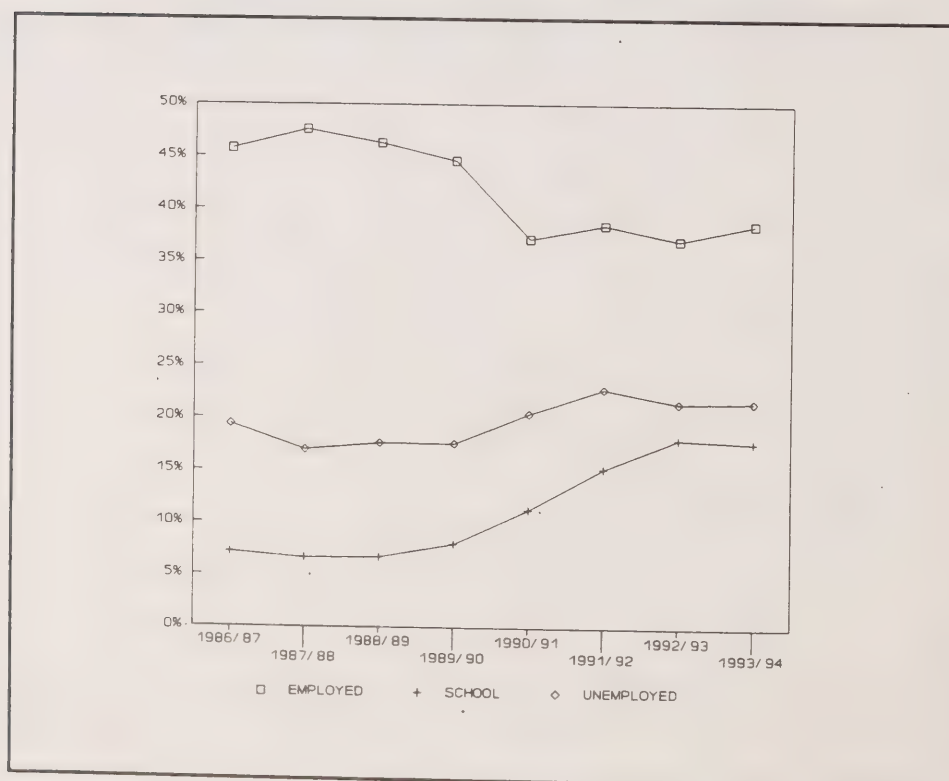
Figure 14:   Basic Option -- Participant Status at Three-Month Follow-Up,
1993/94 YTD

Not Available/Lost Contact (10 6%)

Unemployed (22 1%)

Employed (40 6%)

Other Agency Involvement (2 9%)

In Training (6 8%)

In Education (16 9%)
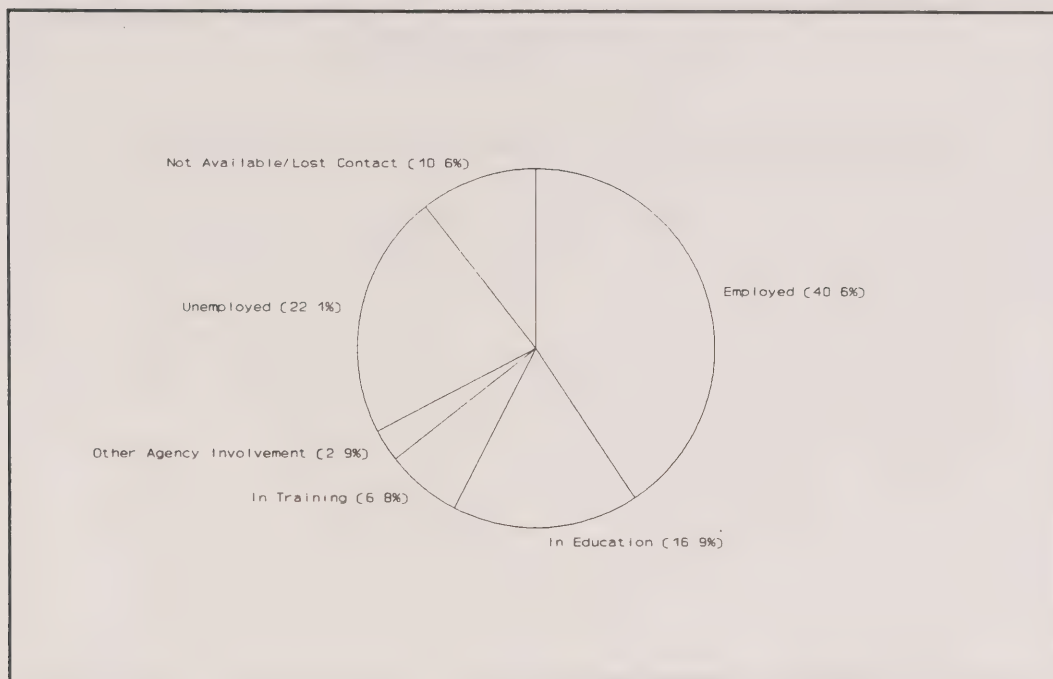
Figure 15:   Guarantee Option -- Participant Status at Three-Month Follow-Up,
1993/94 YTD

Not Available/Lost Contact (16.9%)

Employed (28 8%)

Unemployed (22.8%)

Other Agency Involvement (2 9%)

In Education (18 7%)

In Training (10.0%)
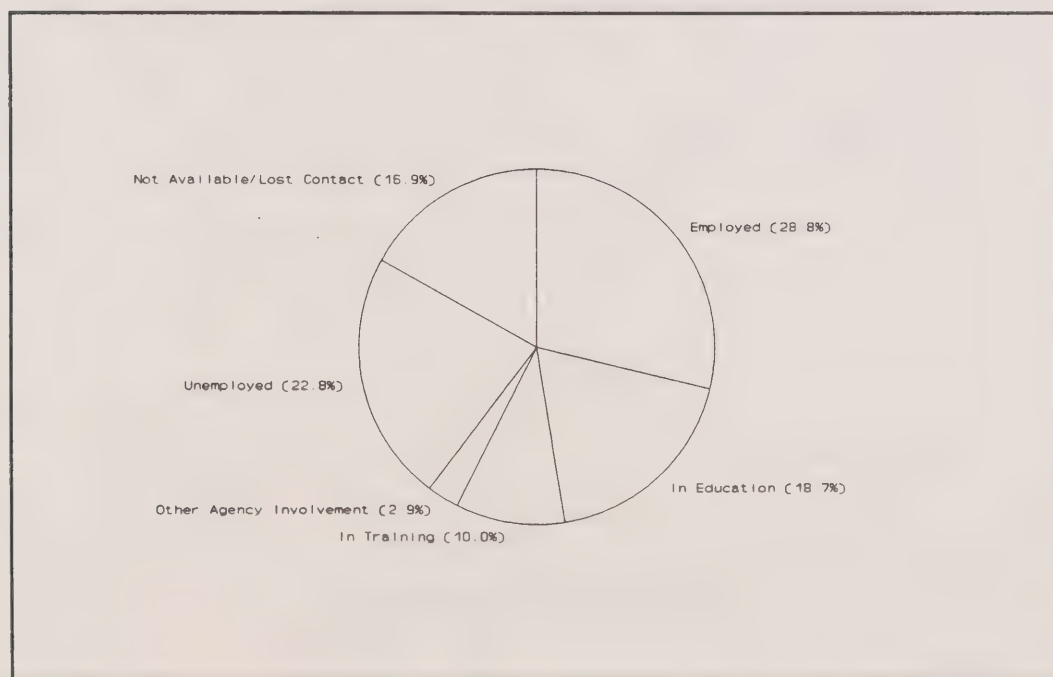
Figure 16:   Part-Time/Part-Time Option -- Participant Status at Three-Month
                    Follow-Up, 1993/94 YTD

Not Available/Lost Contact (15 5%)

Employed (32 9%)

Unemployed (16 4%)

Other Agency Involvement (3 6%)

In Training (8 2%)

In Education (23 4%)
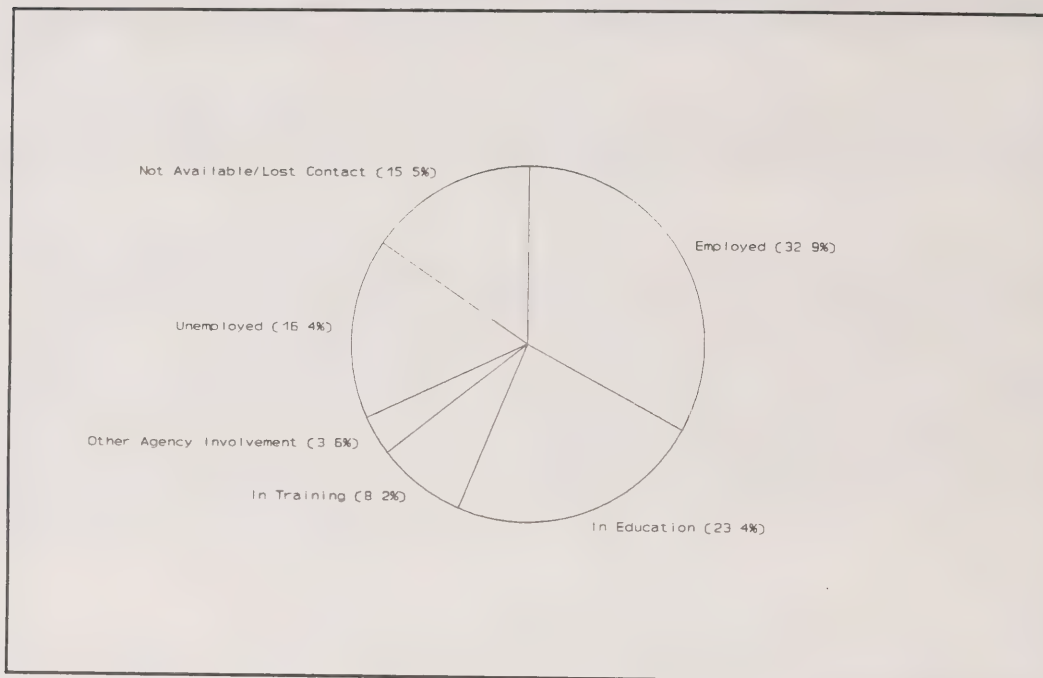
Figure 17:   WEP (All Options) -- Participant Status at Three-Month Follow-
                    Up, 1993/94 YTD

Not Available/Lost Contact (11 8%)

Employed (38 6%)

Unemployed (21 6%)

Other Agency Involvement (3 0%)

In Training (7.3%)

In Education (17.8%)

Figure 18: ETI Rate

$$\boxed{\begin{array}{c} \textbf{5.0} \\ \textbf{SURVEY RESULTS} \end{array}}$$
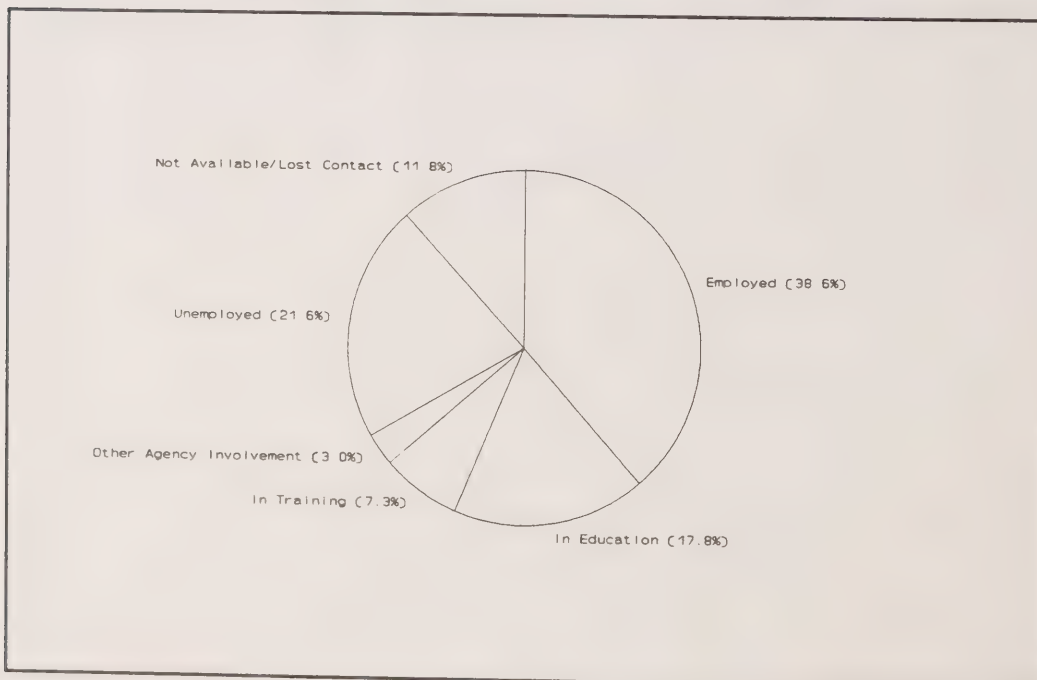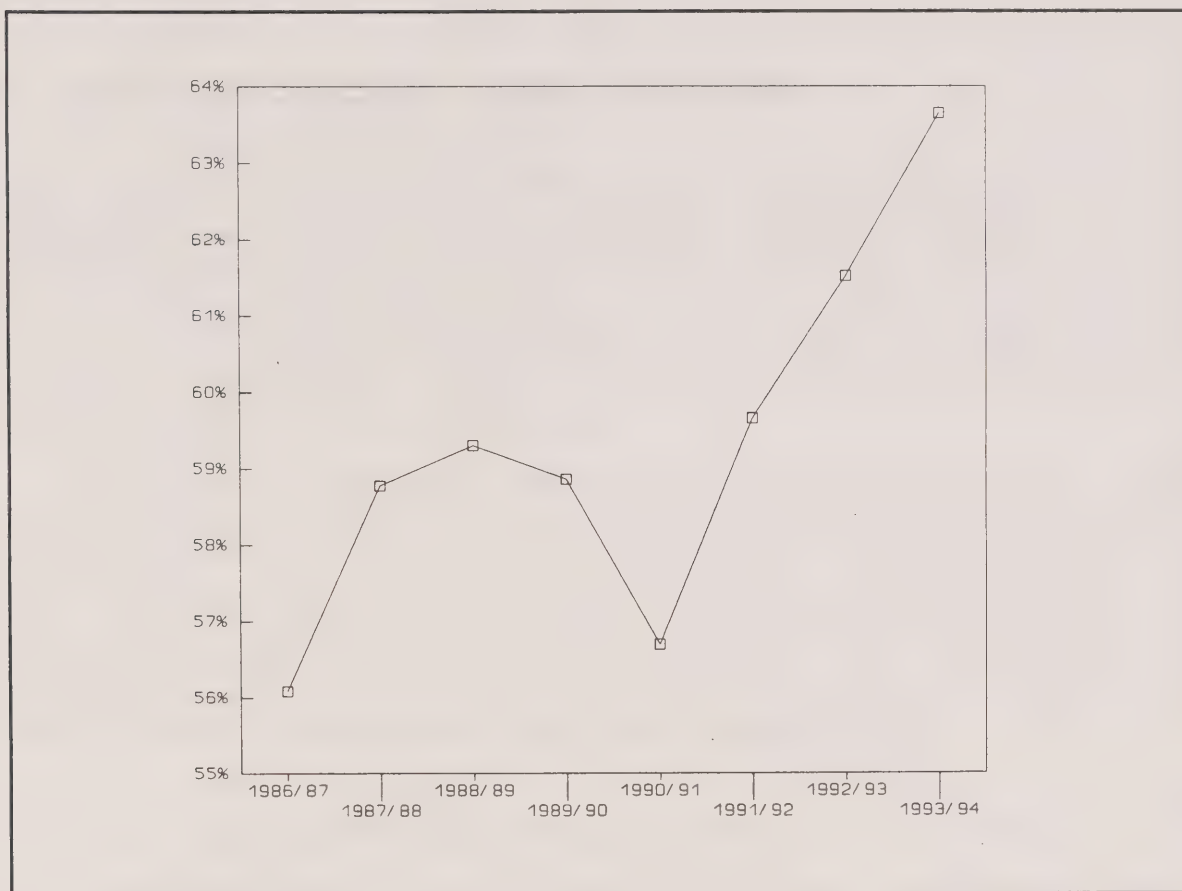
5.1 INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL OVERVIEW

This section summarizes the response to questionnaires which were completed by members of the five stakeholder groups: participants; employers; academic staff; program delivery staff; and centre directors/managers. The data provides a "point-in-time" analysis and a provincial snapshot of the program in 1992. For purposes of analysis, survey responses were grouped by stakeholder type and where appropriate by the four administrative regions of the Youth Unit, Learning and Employment Preparation Branch (Northern, Eastern, Central, and Western). For more information on questionnaire development, sampling, and survey process, please refer to Section 2.0 Review Methodology.

The following summary includes statistical information as well as narrative analysis. When proportions are referred to in the narrative, "some" refers to responses of 44 percent or less, "about half" is used to denote 45 to 50 percent, "most" or "majority" indicates 51 to 75 percent, and "the great majority" is used for responses of above 75 percent. As well, Work Experience Program (WEP) options are frequently referred to by their abbreviated names: Basic 16-Week Option (Basic); Enhanced Training Option (ET); Part-Time Work/Part-Time School Option (PT/PT); and One-Year Guarantee Option (GO). Program and option descriptions are provided in Section 4.0 Baseline Data on the Work Experience Program.

The following is a description of survey respondents by stakeholder group:

i) Participants

There was a 34 percent response rate, or 184 out of 539, from youth participants. Overall, survey respondents were older, had higher levels of education, and lower incidences of social assistance support than the profile of the average FUTURES participant:

- 88 percent of respondents were between 19 and 24 years of age, with the majority of respondents aged 21 or over (72 percent);

- 33 percent indicated that they have less than Grade 12 education, 30 percent have gone as far as Grade 12, and 33 percent have some post-secondary education; and

- 17 percent were recipients of social assistance.

In terms of equity group status, the breakdown was:

*   18 percent racial minorities (11 percent Black, 3 percent other, 2 percent South Asian and 1 percent East or Southeast Asian);

*   3 percent Aboriginal;

*   49 percent women;

*   9 percent Francophone; and

*   1 percent youth with physical disabilities.

There was a notable regional variance in racial minority youth with the highest number of respondents from Central region (53 percent).

ii) Employers

There was a 37 percent response rate, or 461 employers out of 1,251. The majority of employers who responded to the survey represented small organizations and about half were in the private sector:

*   63 percent had less than 20 employees, 17 percent 20 to 50 employees, 16 percent 51 to 499 employees and 5 percent over 500 employees; and

*   48 percent private sector, 27 percent public sector, 20 percent not-for-profit and 5 percent municipal employers.

The profile of employer respondents differs from the traditional FUTURES employer base which has a greater proportion of small organizations (about 78 percent have less than 20 employees) and of private sector employers (about 77 percent).

Employers had an average of 2.5 FUTURES trainees over the past year. Most (70 percent) had two or less. Central region had the highest, averaging four FUTURES trainees per employer per year, followed by Eastern with three, and Northern and Western with two each.

Among employers who indicated having one trainee over the past year, Central was lowest with 28 percent, compared to the other regions which consistently showed 40 to 44 percent. For employers with more than 10 trainees, Central had 7 percent, Eastern 3 percent, Northern 1 percent and Western reported none. This is consistent with the numbers of employees/size of business where Central region had the highest proportion (33 percent), followed by Eastern (23 percent), Northern (20 percent), and then Western (18 percent).

iii) Academic Staff

Forty-three percent of academic staff responded, or 125 out of 291. The majority (53 percent) worked in alternative secondary schools administered by a Board of Education, and the remainder as follows:

*   18 percent worked in regular secondary schools;
*   14 percent other settings;
*   8 percent tutors of correspondence courses; and
*   7 percent community college programs.

Provincially, most academic staff (52 percent) had worked with WEP participants for three years or less, with the average duration being about four years. Respondents reported teaching/tutoring an average of 28 participants over the past year (median of 12). On average, academic staff reported spending approximately 13 hours per week with FUTURES students.

iv) WEP Delivery Staff

Forty-nine percent of WEP delivery staff responded, or 182 out of 372.

v) Centre Directors/Managers

Fifty-nine percent response rate, or 53 centre directors/managers out of 90.

5.2 YOUTH CHARACTERISTICS and BARRIERS

Youth respondents reported major barriers as being lack of money (67 percent), little or no job experience (53 percent), and a lack of education (29 percent) - the latter despite having somewhat more education than the average FUTURES client. Overall, the great majority of participants (91 percent) reported that FUTURES helped them to address these barriers.

Centre directors/managers reported that participants' basic needs, psychological/ behavioural problems, and basic educational needs have increased over the past two years, and that other barriers such as a lack of job-oriented skills, language skills, physiological and cultural barriers have either increased slightly or remained the same. Central and the Western regions showed significantly higher numbers than other regions indicating that lack of basic education and job oriented skills have increased. Central also rated language skills highest, with 85 percent of respondents indicating that this problem has increased, (compared to 22 to 29 percent in other regions).

WEP staff responded that the same barriers have increased over the past two years, but included a lack of job-oriented skills as well. Compared to directors/managers, they also consistently rated psychological/behavioural barriers higher than basic needs, except for Central region where they agree. Staff surveys also reflected the same regional variations mentioned above.

Provincially, a *great majority* of centre directors/managers *strongly* agreed that:

- higher skill demands are placing clients at a greater disadvantage (90 percent);

- employment problems facing youth in their community are more serious than two years ago (88 percent);

- youth need to stay in school longer in order to become successful in the workforce (84 percent);

- *most* strongly agreed that clients are more difficult to place in employment (57 percent); and

- only 22 percent strongly agreed that lower skill level jobs are still available.

Provincially, a *great majority* of delivery staff *strongly* agreed that:

- youth need to stay in school longer in order to become successful in the workforce (89 percent);

- employment problems facing youth in their community are more serious than two years ago (80 percent);

- *most* strongly agreed that higher skill demands are placing clients at a greater disadvantage (74 percent);

- clients are more difficult to place in employment (60 percent); and

- only 20 percent strongly agreed that lower skill level jobs are still available.

While the rank-order differed slightly, directors/managers and delivery staff reached consensus on what they perceived to be the greatest barriers. The "need for youth to stay in school longer" rated highest with delivery staff, while with centre directors/managers it ranked third. Conversely, the statement "higher skill demands are placing clients at a greater disadvantage" rated third with staff and first with directors/managers.

Youth barriers are also reflected in the community services to which delivery staff frequently refer their clients. Most staff (59 percent) ranked the welfare office or other financial assistance as their most frequently referred-to service. This was followed by personal counselling support through mental health agencies or other services, education, assistance with housing, and addictions counselling.

5.3 PROGRAM DESIGN

a) Program Objectives and Accomplishments

i) Current WEP Objective

A majority of centre directors/managers and delivery staff agreed that the current program objective, "assisting job-ready youth to gain work experience and training/upgrading to improve their long-term attachment to the labour force" is still appropriate (77 percent and 78 percent respectively). As well, a great majority of directors/managers (84 percent), staff (82 percent) and academic staff (83 percent) agreed that one objective of the program is to reconnect FUTURES clients to education. However, many directors/managers and staff (44 percent and 43 percent respectively) are concerned that their services have resulted in temporary rather than lasting solutions.

There was also agreement from both directors/managers and staff (55 percent and 59 percent respectively) that the current focus on "job-ready" youth is still appropriate, given the needs of participants and labour market conditions. Nonetheless, in both groups, others disagreed or were neutral (45 percent and 41 percent respectively).

Provincially, less than half of employers felt that all or most of their trainees were ready for entry-level employment at the *conclusion* of their placements, and 16 percent felt that none were ready. Regionally, the results were as follows:

	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western	Province
All were ready	15%	21%	21%	18%	18%
Most were ready	30%	27%	28%	30%	29%
Some were ready	41%	40%	35%	33%	37%
None were ready	15%	12%	17%	20%	16%

ii) Current and Expected Program Accomplishments

The surveys asked stakeholder groups to rate WEP's accomplishments. Both employers and participants ranked "work adjustment," "job training/experience" and "communication/interpersonal skills" as key program accomplishments.

When participants first came to the program, the majority hoped FUTURES could help with on-the-job training (62 percent), teach how to find and keep a job (55 percent), and provide payment while they were in training (50 percent). Some (39 percent) wanted help to figure out what kind of job they could do. Assistance in areas such as help to go back to school, workplace orientation, and counselling were not considered to be as important by many FUTURES participants (17 to 26 percent). When asked to rate how specific training areas helped them in their work placement, 81 percent rated job experience highly (to put on their résumé, to help them find another job). There was very little variation across regions. The majority of participants also said that they learned a lot about the following:

- learning how to fit in the workplace (74 percent);

- communication skills (72 percent);

- training in all parts of the job (71 percent);

- problem-solving skills (63 percent);

- skills in dealing with authority (62 percent); and

- information on how to look for a job (57 percent).

Employers rank-ordered the following as what they believed was accomplished by trainees during work placements:

- work adjustment training;

- skill training in career of choice;

- inter-personal/communication skills;

- increased access to lasting employment;

- problem-solving/conflict resolution; and

- dealing with authority.

The surveys asked centre directors/managers and delivery staff to comment on what they believe the programs currently accomplish **and** what should be accomplished. Both groups ranked "educational upgrading" highest for PT/PT. Directors/managers ranked "specific vocational/skills training" and "skills and strategies for job seeking" as the greatest current accomplishments of participants in all three WEP options (Basic, GO, PT/PT). Delivery staff consistently ranked "specific vocational/skills training" and "workplace orientation" high for all three options, over job-seeking skills. Generally, both groups gave softer topics such as conflict resolution and dealing with authority lower rankings.

Generally, both directors/managers and staff perceived programs to provide what they think should be accomplished, they would like to see more emphasis on access to lasting employment in Basic, and on educational upgrading in GO. As well, staff believe there should be more emphasis on life-long learning and access to lasting employment in PT/PT.

The following summarizes how directors/managers and staff ranked **current** accomplishments of each WEP option:

Basic: Directors/managers ranked specific vocational skills/training and job-seeking skills highest, educational upgrading and life-long learning the lowest. Staff ranked workplace orientation, specific vocational/skills training highest. Dealing with authority, educational upgrading and life-long learning were lowest.

PT/PT: Both directors/managers and staff rated educational upgrading highest. Staff also ranked workplace orientation, specific vocational/skills training and life-long learning highly. Directors/managers rated specific vocational/skills training, job-seeking skills, and life-long learning highly. Dealing with authority and conflict resolution were rated lowest by directors/managers and staff.

GO: Specific vocational/skills training, workplace orientation, and job-seeking skills were ranked highest by directors/managers, with educational upgrading showing lower in all regions except the West, where it was ranked second. Staff also ranked specific vocational/skills training highest, followed by workplace orientation, educational upgrading, and job-seeking skills.

When asked what accomplishments the program **ought** to provide FUTURES participants, the ranking was as follows:

Basic: Specific vocational/skills training, workplace orientation and increased access to lasting employment were ranked highest across all regions by directors/managers and overall by staff (with staff placing workplace orientation ahead of access to lasting employment).

PT/PT: Both directors/managers and staff ranked educational upgrading highest in this option, indicating that the focus on educational upgrading should be maintained. Directors/managers ranked life-long learning fairly high across all regions except Central, where it was ranked last. Staff also ranked life-long learning high, followed by specific vocational skills training and access to lasting employment. Staff would also like to see more emphasis on life-long learning and access to lasting employment in PT/PT and would put less emphasis on workplace orientation.

GO: Directors/managers ranked specific vocational/skills training highest in the
          Eastern and Central regions, and educational upgrading highest in Northern
          and Western regions. Staff gave educational upgrading the highest ranking,
          followed by specific vocational/skills training, access to lasting employment and
          job-seeking skills.   Staff and director/managers would like to see more
          emphasis on educational upgrading.   Staff would also like to see more
          emphasis on access to lasting employment.

b)   Participant Eligibility

Overall, both centre directors/managers and delivery staff agreed that the client eligibility
criteria allow access to youth who need the program.   Option-specific responses are
summarized below:

Basic: A majority of directors/managers (67 percent) and staff (61 percent) believe the
          eligibility criteria allow access to Basic. However, Some staff (33 percent)
          believe it doesn't, showing some variance of opinion.

E.T.   About half of director/managers and staff felt that the eligibility criteria allow
          access. In both groups, Western region disagreed that the eligibility criteria
          allow access.

PT/PT: A majority of delivery staff (66) felt that the criteria allow access. Over half of
          directors/managers (51 percent) agree or are neutral.

GO: Over half of delivery staff in all regions except the West agreed that the
          eligibility criteria allow access for youth who need the program, while the
          majority of directors/managers (66 percent) agree or are neutral.

When asked if they would like to see any revisions to the eligibility criteria, two of the
most frequent suggestion from directors/managers and staff, who responded to the
question, was to reduce the qualifying periods required for the time out-of-school or work
for Basic (about half of directors/managers and one-third of staff).   Some
directors/managers and staff supported changing the age criteria for Basic and PT/PT
(about one-third of both groups). As well, some staff recommended changing the age
criteria for GO, and the graduate criteria for Basic (about one-third).

c)   Program Durations and Use of Options

Most directors/managers reported accommodating increased client demand for service
by limiting the number of weeks on work placements in order to serve more youth, and
by using PT/PT and GO more sparingly.

i)   Program Options

Generally, during the last two years, use of Basic appears to have increased, and the use of other options has decreased. Some directors/managers and staff indicated that there was an increase in use of Basic (67 percent).   Regionally, it appeared that directors/managers are cutting back on longer/more expensive options and using Basic more often, with the exception of the North, which appears to be using all options except ET with the same frequency as in previous years.

A majority of directors/managers (64 percent) support deletions and changes to the options currently offered. Respondents who believed there should be changes were asked to note what that change should be. Of the 34 who answered the open-ended question, 61 percent (21 respondents) recommended deleting GO, 18 percent recommended deleting enhanced training, and a very few (12 percent) suggested making the options more flexible.

ii)   Program Durations

Responses from directors/managers and staff indicated that the most common duration of programming either remained the same or decreased. Staff responded that overall durations are decreasing, especially for GO, followed by Basic. The most common program option durations were reported by directors/managers and staff as follows:

Basic: 12 weeks (48 percent directors/managers, 48 percent staff)
         16 weeks (19 percent directors/managers, 36 percent staff)
         14 weeks (15 percent directors/managers)
         Average - 13 weeks director/managers, 13 weeks staff

ET: 26 weeks (39 percent directors/managers, 22 percent staff)
         10 weeks (22 percent directors/managers, 29 percent staff)
         4 weeks (11 percent directors/managers)
         Average - 16 weeks director/managers, 13 weeks staff

PT/PT: 26 weeks (27 percent directors/managers, 25 percent staff)
         52 weeks (22 percent directors/managers, 33 percent staff)
         Average - 34 weeks director/managers, 37 weeks staff

GO: 52 weeks (22 percent directors/managers, 18 percent staff)
         26 weeks (17 percent directors/managers, 17 percent staff)
         16 weeks (13 percent directors/managers)
         Average - 28 weeks director/managers, 30 weeks staff

For directors/managers, ideal durations would be consistent with present guidelines, increasing Basic to 16 weeks (44 percent) and 20 weeks (22 percent), PT/PT to 52 weeks and ET and GO would remain the same. Similarly, staff surveyed would increase Basic to 16 weeks (33 percent), PT/PT and GO remain at 52 weeks (56 percent and 44 percent) and ET to remain at 10 weeks (31 percent). Directors/managers and staff in Central region indicated a higher average optimal duration for Basic of 25 to 27 weeks, compared with 16 to 17 weeks in other regions.

Provincially, directors/managers reported the following average hours worked by participants on placement per week:

Basic: 36 to 41 hours (67 percent), 31 to 35 hours (31 percent)

PT/PT: Less than 24 hours (46 percent), 31 to 41 hours (41 percent)

GO: 36 to 41 hours (69 percent)

Employers reported that participants spent an average of 16 weeks with them on placement. Employers in Northern region reported the longest average placements at 19 weeks. Western and Central are consistent at 14 and 15 weeks, while Eastern reported 17 weeks on average. Provincially, employers reported the following durations:

DURATION	% EMPLOYERS
1 - 5 weeks	2
6 - 10 weeks	20
11 - 15 weeks	31
16 - 20 weeks	35
21 - 50 weeks	9
51+ weeks	3

Most employers (56 percent) felt that the program duration was appropriate for the type of training required by the trainee. Some (34 percent) felt that the time-frame was too short to allow sufficient training for entry-level employments. Despite this, only 47 percent of employers felt that most (29 percent) or all (18 percent) of their trainees were ready for full-time employment at the end of their placements. Thirty-seven percent felt that some were ready, and 16 percent felt that none of their trainees were ready.

Of the participants who responded, 61 percent spent 10 to 19 weeks on work placements (30 percent 10 to 14 weeks and 31 percent 15 to 19 weeks). If participants could have been in their placements longer, the majority indicated that they would have had more in-depth, specialized experience. As well, some (30 percent) indicated that they would have learned technical skills related to their job. In the open-ended section of the survey, 14 percent of respondents thought that placements should be longer, for both employment and education.

d) Participant Income Support

i) Wage Subsidies/Education Stipends

Lack of money was reported to be a significant problem for a majority of the youth who responded to the survey (67 percent), and was their most frequently reported barrier. When the youth respondents first came to the centre, half hoped that FUTURES could assist with pay while training. As well, 59 percent of staff ranked the welfare office or other referrals for financial assistance as their most frequently referred-to community service.

A majority of directors/managers believed that payment for participants was considered extremely important, either as wages during the work placement (80 percent of directors/managers, 97 percent of staff) or stipends for school (58 percent of directors/managers, 82 percent of staff). While a majority of participants (67 percent) indicated that they would not have gone to school during their work placement without the stipend; some (33 percent) indicated that the stipend was not necessary to their attendance at school.

ii) Special Support Allowances

Directors/managers reported that FUTURES Special Support Allowances (SSA) are currently spent on transportation, child care and tuition, in that order of priority. While the great majority of directors/managers did not offer any suggestions when asked if there are other items that should be covered by SSA, a few (seven) mentioned wardrobe allowance.

iii) Employer Contributions

Under the current guidelines employers are not able to contribute to the minimum wage subsidy or to "top-up" participant pay beyond the minimum wage. While a majority of directors/managers (54 percent) and staff (57 percent) would not support fully unsubsidized placements within FUTURES; an even greater proportion (71 percent of directors/managers and 61 percent of staff) would support developing partially subsidized placements. As well, most directors/managers (76 percent) and staff (63 percent) would support financial contributions, such as training bonuses, from employers.

Some employers (25 percent) responding to the survey identified that they would have participated in the FUTURES program even if they had been required to provide a portion of the trainee's wages during the placement. However, most (75 percent) indicated that they would not have. In the open-ended portion of this question, 39 percent reported that they would not have done so because they were financially unable to, or felt that they needed incentives to hire and train unskilled or inexperienced people (26 percent). Some (11 percent) said that they might be willing to provide a portion of trainee wages depending on the person's skills, abilities and preliminary assessments and 9 percent depending on funds and vacancies available.

5.4 PROGRAM FUNCTIONS AND COMPONENTS

a) Intake, Assessment, Vocational Counselling, and Participant/Placement Matching Process

When asked to rate how helpful counselling they had received at the FUTURES centre was in preparing them for their work placement, the majority of participants (71 percent) indicated that it helped, and 26 percent were neutral.

Some employers (11 percent) commented that it would be helpful if youth had more established career directions or "readiness" for the program before going on placement; and that there needed to be improvements in matching between participants and employers in job placements. As well, some academic staff (16 percent) recommended that a counselling function be added to ensure option choice/activities matched participant career goals.

When asked about significant shifts in time and resources allotted to specific functions over the past two years, 22 percent of director/managers and 27 percent of staff reported that more time was spent on **intake and assessment**. Most staff indicated that they use a basic eligibility check (76 percent) and identification of client expectations and needs (76 percent) during intake. The majority of these respondents also indicated performing most if not all of the other intake and assessment activities listed in the questionnaire, including: basic needs assessment, assessment of skills and abilities, vocational planning and goal-setting, exploration of community resources for referral as appropriate, and activities related to the participant/placement matching process.

A majority of staff (61 percent) reported that they sometimes/often use vocational and/or clinical testing as part of the intake/assessment process, usually done internally (49 percent) by the centre. These respondents indicated that where these assessments are not done, it is because the additional information is not required to complete intake/assessment (20 percent) or because financial resources are not available for the assessment to be purchased on a regular basis (21 percent).

b)   Workshops

Most staff (59 percent) indicated that they provided pre-placement workshops in WEP of which the majority (81 percent) were 1 to 3 days in length. Some staff (37 percent) provided workshops during placement of which the majority (83 percent) of were one day in length. The average percentage of time allotted for topic areas in workshops:

- job search techniques   33 %
- career clarification   18%
- job maintenance   17%
- job safety   14%

Most youth (61 percent) reported participating in a group workshop prior to commencing their placements. Over half said the workshops were either of "no help" or were "not great, not terrible", while just under half said they helped.

c)   Training Plans

To develop training plans, 78 percent of the staff who responded to the survey reported using a standard format which is modified with each participant. Seventy-two percent indicated that training plans were useful in facilitating the process for participants, the centre, employers and others.

Of youth who responded to the survey, 29 percent indicated that they participated in writing a training plan with FUTURES staff before they began their work placements. However, the great majority (81 percent) reported speaking to their supervisor at work about their training plan when they began their work placement. When asked to rate how helpful training plans were in preparing them for their work placement, 60 percent of participants responding were either neutral, or indicated that the plan was of no help, while 40 percent indicated that their training plan had helped.

Most employers (54 percent) reported finding the training plan useful in helping them work with and guide the placement for the trainee, while 46 percent were neutral or did not find it useful.

d)   Educational Component

The majority of directors/managers and staff agree that higher skill demands are placing youth at a greater disadvantage, and some identified that lower skill level jobs are less available.

Generally, directors/managers and staff agreed on educational needs of youth and the links between education and success in the workforce. In fact, 94 percent of directors/managers and 89 percent of staff believed youth need to stay in school longer in order to become successful in the workforce. A majority of directors/managers (58 percent) and staff (66 percent) felt that basic educational needs have increased over the past two years and are presenting barriers to employment. Thirty-six percent of directors/managers and 29 percent of staff indicated that it has remained the same.

Of the youth participants who responded to the survey: 33 percent indicated that they had less than Grade 12, 30 percent had gone as far as Grade 12, 2 percent Grade 13, and overall, 33 percent of those who responded had post-secondary education. Despite this comparatively high level of academic achievement, 29 percent indicated lack of education as a problem which they had before they started their FUTURES placement. Twenty-six percent hoped that FUTURES could assist them to return to school.

Most participants (56 percent) did not think that they would have returned to school if they had not participated in FUTURES. The great majority (87 percent) felt that they will continue on in school, either now or in the future.

A great majority of directors/managers, staff and academic staff, (84 percent, 82 percent and 83 percent respectively), believed that an objective of WEP is to reconnect FUTURES clients to education. Generally, when asked about program accomplishments, directors/managers would like to see more emphasis on educational upgrading in GO, and staff would like to see more emphasis on educational upgrading and access to lasting employment in both GO and PT/PT. When asked how to improve this objective within PT/PT and GO, both directors/managers and FUTURES staff suggested longer durations and the allowance of credits other than high school.

Directors/managers also recommended increased funding and improved relations with school boards and independent learning centres (ILC). Delivery staff recommended better monitoring of academic achievement. Some academic staff wanted to see more emphasis on training, education and upgrading, and a variety of other areas including: an increased counselling function to ensure that participants' option or choice of activity matches their career goals, improved monitoring of academic achievement, and increased communications between stakeholders. As well, general comments by academic staff indicated concern that youth not abuse the program (17 percent of 99 respondents).

Directors/managers reported that in PT/PT, the highest numbers of participants obtained credit through the alternative school system. Most directors/managers reported using PT/PT and GO more sparingly during 1992 in order to manage demand for service.

Forty-eight percent of academic staff said that 90 to 100 percent of FUTURES participants obtained credit(s) over the past academic year. Regionally, there was some variance, as follows: Central 39 percent, Eastern 77 percent, Northern 38 percent, and Western 64 percent.

Most (66 percent) classes or tutorials were offered during the day only. Some (32 percent) were offered as day or evening classes or on a flexible basis. There was significant regional variation here. Central region reported offering day classes only, Western offered a balance between day classes and a flexible schedule, and Eastern and Northern offered a range of options, (although Northern reported offering slightly more "day classes only" than Eastern).

e) Monitoring and Linkages

Overall, directors/managers appeared to want to reduce time and resources spent working on placement and other employer activities, and increase the time spent working directly with participants. In the open-ended section the most frequent response from staff and directors/managers was that more time was being spent on intake and assessment. Staff indicated that they would prefer to decrease the amount of time and resources spent working with participants and increase that spent on placement and employer activities. A number of employers, FUTURES participants, and academic staff reported wanting to have more contact with FUTURES staff. As well, academic staff would like to improve communication between all stakeholders.

i) Directors/Managers and Staff

When surveyed about demand for service and the current level of support available to participants waiting for placement, directors/managers stated that they would like to have better links in the community. These respondents would also like to enhance relations and linkages with school boards as a means of improving the objective of reconnecting clients to education within PT/PT and GO.

Under general comments, some directors/managers commented that Youth Employment Counselling Centres and community colleges should attempt to work more cooperatively and streamline services to complement one another (20 percent of those who responded to the question, 8 percent overall).

When directors/managers and staff were asked about the proportion of time and resources spent on specific activities, about 10 percent was spent on working with their community including making referrals to other agencies and/or school boards. When asked whether this figure should change, it rose one percentage point for directors/managers, and declined one point for staff. When surveyed about demand for service and the current level of support available to participants waiting for placement, directors/managers stated that they would like to have better links in the community.

Most staff (63 percent) referred 30 percent or less of their participant caseload to one or more community services as part of the client's participation in WEP over the course of 1992/93. Referrals to services were ranked as follows:

- welfare office or others for financial assistance;

- personal counselling support (mental health agencies or other counselling services);

- education

- assistance with housing;

- addictions counselling;

- job training programs; and

- group counselling and recreational activities (infrequently used).

Directors/managers reported spending about one-third of their time and resources on placement and other employer activities, including outreach, marketing, and monitoring during placements, while staff reported spending about one-quarter of their time and resources. When asked what the time and resources ought to be both groups agreed on an average of 28 percent.

Directors/managers and staff reported spending about the same amount of time and resources working with participants (30 percent and 34 percent respectively). Both groups would like to spend about 32 percent of time and resources working with participants. Directors/managers would slightly increase the time spent on follow-up from 6 percent to 8 percent, while staff would maintain this proportion at 6 percent.

Most staff (59 percent) reported being in contact with participants on average once every two weeks during placement, and 52 percent reported the same contact with employers. Overall, staff reported having more contact with participants than with employers during placements. Generally, the majority of staff monitor plans and progress of participants by (ranked in order of preference): workplace visits, phone calls to participants/employers and joint interviews.

ii)   Employers

The majority (66 percent) reported having contact with FUTURES staff every 2 to 4 weeks. The remainder identified having contact at the beginning and end of each placement (15 percent), approximately once per week (13 percent), or only one meeting (6 percent).

The great majority of employers (81 percent) reported that the frequency of contact was just right in helping to facilitate the placement. Eighteen percent of respondents would have preferred more contact, and only 2 percent felt that less contact was required.

Employers in Central region reported the broadest range of types of contact with FUTURES staff, with every 2 to 4 weeks being the most common, followed closely by meetings held at the beginning and end of placements and slightly lower numbers of one meeting only. Compared with other regions, Central had the highest number of employers indicating that they would prefer more contact (28 percent) and the lowest number indicating that the frequency of contact was just right. Employers in the Eastern and Western regions reported the highest numbers of once a week contact and fairly high percentages of contact every 2 to 4 weeks and at the beginning and end of placements. Eighty-three percent of employers felt that the frequency of contact was just right. Northern region reported the highest number of contacts every 2 to 4 weeks (77 percent) and the second highest number of contacts once per week. These employers appeared to be most satisfied with the frequency of contact, with the highest percentage indicating the contact to be just right, and the lowest percentage of employers indicating a preference for more contact.

iii) Participants

While at work, 82 percent of participants spoke with FUTURES staff about their placement, ranging in frequency from once per week (23 percent) to once per month (34 percent). The great majority of participants appeared to be fairly satisfied with the frequency of these contacts.

The great majority of participants surveyed (90 percent) would return to the FUTURES centre to get help if they needed it.

iv) Academic Staff

Most (73 percent) academic staff reported being involved with the staff at the FUTURES office for monitoring of participant progress and for regular updates.

Less than 50 percent reported being involved with FUTURES staff for the following:

- meeting at the outset of academic placements to discuss academic goals (47 percent);

- joint assessment of client needs for academic upgrading (40 percent); and

- the end of the academic placement, to review progress, obtain results and hear recommendations for further academic work (37 percent).

Twenty-eight percent reported being in contact with FUTURES staff once per week during the participant's placement, 39 percent reported contact every 2 to 4 weeks, and 21 percent reported having no contact with FUTURES staff. Sixty-one percent reported that the frequency of contact is "just right" and 38 percent would prefer more.

Regionally, while academic staff in Western region reported the highest frequency of contact and Northern the lowest; Northern reported the highest satisfaction with their present rate of contact. Central and Eastern regions reported the highest levels of "no contact" (36 percent and 24 percent respectively), and the highest levels of preference for more contact (43 percent and 46 percent respectively).

f)   Follow-up Support

The great majority of youth participants indicated that they had a plan of what they were going to do next, now that they had completed the FUTURES program (82 percent), and would return to the centre for help if they needed it (90 percent). Most (67 percent) indicated that they got a job after the FUTURES placement, the majority finding work with the FUTURES employer (46 percent). Central and Eastern regions had the highest levels of employment following FUTURES (80 percent and 71 percent respectively). Northern and Western showed 57 percent and 62 percent response, with a greater proportion finding work with non-FUTURES employers.

Some employers (18 percent) reported hiring all of their trainees at the end of their placements while 45 percent did not hire any of their trainees. Seventeen percent reported hiring 1 to 49 percent; 38 percent reported hiring over 50 percent of their trainees at the end of their placements; and 14 percent hired 50 to 59 percent.

Most directors/managers (59 percent) reported providing additional support or referrals as part of follow-up. As well, most (72 percent to 74 percent) reported using follow-up statistics collected to track program outcomes and as part of a broader program evaluation. Over half (51 percent) obtained feedback from participants and reported tracking client satisfaction.

Both directors/managers and staff reported spending an average proportion of 6 percent of staff time and resources on follow-up. This figure rose to 8 percent when directors/managers were asked whether the emphasis on time and resource allocations should change, but staff would not, on average, make any change.

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6.0
FOCUS GROUP RESULTS
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6.1   INTRODUCTION

The focus groups provided the major stakeholders of the Work Experience Program (WEP) with an opportunity to speak directly to questions about the program and to voice concerns and needs. In many ways, the Steering Committee felt that this was one of the most worthwhile parts of the review as it provided a unique opportunity to hear directly from some of the people most affected by the program within their own communities or regions. Facilitators of the sessions were impressed with the high turn-out rate of most sessions. Especially noteworthy were the number of young people who volunteered an evening of their free time to participate in a focus group in spite of the cold weather and the fact that aside from being served pizza, and in some cases provided with bus tickets, they were not offered any remuneration. Informal feedback from participants was also very positive, with virtually all stakeholder groups expressing support for this kind of exchange.

The information attained from the focus group sessions is intended to supplement and enhance the data obtained from other parts of the review, such as the stakeholder surveys. Some 120 stakeholders were interviewed, over a three-week period from October 1 to 20, 1992.

It is important to note that stakeholders' perceptions of the WEP program are influenced to a large extent by their experiences with local FUTURES' offices. In some cases, participants reached conclusions about the overall FUTURES program based on their experiences with individual centres.   Centre-specific practices or internal policies were often interpreted as mandated by the FUTURES Guidelines or the Learning and Employment Preparation (LEP) Branch rather than as the result of local decision making and discretion.   This needs to be factored into any interpretation of the results of these focus group sessions.

The following is a summary of the major themes synthesized from the focus group sessions. Themes have been condensed from the notes originally recorded during the sessions, and further from summary notes compiled for each stakeholder group. (See **Appendices 9.6 to 9.7**.) While the summary provides an aggregate look at the items raised for discussion, it does not always record how often they were raised, or how much focus they were given by session participants.

6.2   KEY THEMES FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS

Stakeholders described the difficult challenges facing the program, ranging from socio-economic factors facing youth to the response of the educational system and community resources. These included:

- less available employment due to the recession, coupled with concurrent issues of poverty;

- the difficulty of the educational system to either retain or adequately prepare young people for work (numeracy and literacy issues);

- the lack of work experience and training which bars access to entry-level positions;

- complex social and personal adjustment issues which impact on readiness for work;

- a lack of guidance, career information and direction; and,

- gaps or shortages of community resources and services to support youth.

Stakeholders indicated a great deal of support and commitment for the program and its ability to help youth become employed. The following aspects were repeatedly cited as the greatest strengths of the program:

- inclusion of educational component as part of the program;

- access to work experience and training;

- counselling which provides vocational direction and support throughout the process;

- building of self-esteem, and a positive work experience to build on;

- development of a good work ethic and behaviours;

- financial support to participants on the program; and,

- high level of commitment and genuine desire on the part of FUTURES staff to assist young people in their communities.

Areas of weakness were identified, in terms of needs which are not being consistently met through the program. The following issues were common across stakeholder groups and were repeatedly raised for discussion:

- time frame for the educational component is often too short to allow for the attainment of required credits;

- shortage or limitations of educational and employment opportunities in some communities;

- program struggles against placements being used to provide "menial labour" rather than appropriate work experiences;

- communication difficulties between participants, employers and FUTURES staff in order to consistently obtain feedback and resolve problems as they arise during placement;

- lack of clarity around roles and expectations of each stakeholder group, and some weakness in assessment information to facilitate an appropriate matching of participants to placements;

- balancing high demand for service on a fixed budget, coupled with managing unit costs, is limiting what is available (e.g. shortening program durations);

- issues around the effectiveness of the Guaranteed Option in its current design; and,

- weakness in participant follow-up at program completion, especially when employment has not been attained.

All groups, except for participants, were asked to step back and brainstorm around what the major objectives of the program should ideally be. Although there appeared to be consensus in terms of the objectives, there were differing viewpoints on where the priorities should be in the program (e.g. a pragmatic service that mainly addresses short-term issues and provides a work experience in a readily attainable area, v.s. embarking on a career planning process which is designed to include the longer-term). The following is a summary of the statements of principle made by the groups:

- to prepare young people to become self-supporting individuals and productive members of society;

- to assist young people to develop long-term career goals by providing career planning;

- to provide young people with the skills to enable them to find and keep jobs;

- to teach the "soft" employment skills in addition to the more technical skills related to a specific job;

- to promote life-long learning and the value of seeking ongoing support throughout one's working life;

- to meet the short-term needs of the participants;

- to provide practical work experience to young people;

- to maintain the flexibility to be able to meet both community and individual needs;

- to align the program's philosophies and principles to those of the Pre-Employment Preparation Program (PEP); and

- to provide service to disadvantaged youth.

All groups (except for participants) also brainstormed around who the program should ideally be serving. In this area, viewpoints varied not only between stakeholder groups, but among them as well. The following summarizes the main points of discussion:

Age Criteria

- Many supported the present eligibility of 16 to 24, rationalizing that other services are available for older age groups. Some suggested that the upper age be extended beyond 24 (even up to 35) due to the economy and the fact that young people are staying in school longer. Others supported increasing the lower age limit to 17 or 18, citing the program's poor success in working with early school leavers under the age of 15.

Participant Characteristics

- Although no single theme emerged here, suggestions were made that the program should serve those most in need. Others advocated the opposite, suggesting that those most able to benefit should be targeted. Issues of participant readiness were also debated, as was eligibility of high school, college and university graduates. Points were raised about the importance of this program to Canadian newcomers. Others cautioned that the program should not be used to deal with settlement issues.

All stakeholders had suggestions for changes to the design and operations of the current program. The following is a summary of the points made in this discussion:

Program Durations

- For most groups, this was a central issue due to the growing demand for service. **Most stakeholders were .critical of reduced program durations as a way to manage participant demand within existing budgets.** Also, most stakeholders were highly critical of serving an increased number of participants as a method of controlling measures of administrative efficiency, such as unit costs. They supported serving fewer participants more comprehensively, over putting more through the program with less available to them in terms of duration and support. Many maintained that it continues to be possible to balance serving more participants better, by adapting the participants' needs to program durations. All groups advocated for increased program funding.

- Suggestions for the **optimum length** of programming varied. The majority of stakeholders who have experienced reductions in the number of program weeks available, for financial reasons, strongly advocated that the durations be extended back to the maximum allowable under the current guidelines. (N.B. Most stakeholder groups, with the exception of the directors/managers sessions, were not aware that this was already possible.) Others supported current durations - either the maximum allowable by the guidelines, or the reduced number implemented by many centres.

- Many recommended that a **more flexible model** be developed, where program length is determined by individual needs. However, staff and employers particularly noted that consistency across the province is also important. In the academic focus groups, it was suggested that the duration for participants attending school be extended to a maximum of three years, in order to allow adequate time to complete studies. Others felt that given the high numbers of young people requiring assistance, the program may no longer be able to afford to pay participants stipends for the academic component. Some felt that weeks on placement should be reduced in order to allow some structured program time at the end for follow-up. Others suggested that placement weeks be extended beyond the norm only in situations where participants have not been hired by program completion.

Linkages Among Stakeholders

- There was a high level of agreement that program linkages between all WEP stakeholders be strengthened. There were recommendations about the need for participants, FUTURES staff, employers, and where applicable, academic staff to communicate better through-out the program. Strategies for this included more site visits, regular meetings with all stakeholders present and closer monitoring throughout the placement.

- The need for better coordination between service providers was also supported on two levels. Within communities, there was a desire to align programs so that they complement and support one another better. On an individual participant level, there were suggestions about strengthening the practice of case conferencing with other community programs.

- The need for increased and more consistent communications to the field from the LEP Branch was recommended. Leadership from government at the Inter-Ministerial level and better coordination between various levels of government was also supported.

Educational Component

- There was strong support that all academic work should promote life-long learning. Others cautioned that the program should not focus on education for its own sake, since WEP is essentially an employment program. There was some debate about whether program durations should be increased to accommodate extra time in school, or whether participants who require more intensive schooling should attain the credits on their own. In fact, many commented that the program should encourage high school-aged youth to return to school.

- There were a number of viewpoints presented on how the academic component should be linked to the program. There was support for a flexible, participant-centred model which was seen to promote better working relationships between stakeholders. There was discussion about setting up alternative schools which would be designed exclusively for FUTURES' participants. Others disagreed, noting that the goal should be to integrate the participants with mainstream programs wherever possible. Many commented that there is a need to strengthen relationships between FUTURES and the school boards.

Financial Contributions by Employers

- The issue of employer's making financial contributions was raised and viewpoints differed around whether this should be included in the program. Some focus group participants felt strongly that employers should not be expected to contribute financially. They reasoned that employers are already contributing enough by providing the training. As well, employers may require more choice in the selection of participants. This would risk the service the program could provide to the severely employment disadvantaged. Most employers who attended the focus groups were part of small businesses, who indicated that they simply could not afford to pay.

  At the other end of the spectrum, others reasoned that employers' contributions would enhance the dollars available to the program, and help to strengthen the commitment of employers toward the placements.

- Most groups favoured the use of employer bonusing, and advocated that any changes to the program which included the financial contributions of employers be discretionary and flexible. Other suggestions included employer "top-ups" (program would pay the minimum wage and employers would add to it), and the changing of guidelines to allow participants to work extra hours on placement on the employers' payroll.

Intake/Assessment

- There was strong support for a more comprehensive assessment process which deals with immediate ("survival") needs, and develops a longer-term career path, through an examination of individual aptitudes and preferences, as well as labour market information. At the other end of the spectrum, some favoured a more expedient and streamlined assessment process. There was much discussion about how a program balances these shorter and longer-term approaches, with many advocating that given the extensive needs of most participants, the program can realistically address only short-term objectives.

- Comments were made about participant "readiness" for the program, with suggestions that potential participants be better screened for suitability at intake, and referred to more appropriate programs if necessary. The need for better "matching" of participants with employers was repeatedly raised in the discussion.

- Other suggestions for changes to program design included: a one to two-week pre-placement/orientation process, with stipends or other financial support paid to participants; and the development of a brief trial period in the workplace to ensure appropriate matching, before the placement is formalized.

- There were frequent comments about the need to harmonize WEP with the changes and renewal of PEP, as well as to enhance linkages between the two. Suggestions included the need to adapt PEP goals and philosophies in WEP, to remove gaps between the two programs, and to change the WEP guidelines to reflect the renewed PEP program.

Training Plans

- Some criticism was expressed that training plans are not being developed by all the stakeholders together, nor referred to during the placement. The need to strengthen and better use the training plans was favoured. Some advocated that the training plans should be condensed.

  Others indicated that training plans are not necessary, and should not be used.

Follow-Up

- There were frequent comments about the need for better follow-up services after completing the program (e.g. further training, apprenticeship, counselling, education). This was seen to be especially important for the participants who did not find a job at the end of their placements. These participants talked about feeling "dumped" by the program and not sure what to do next. For reporting purposes, many favoured the follow-up period being extended beyond the three-month period.

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7.0
KEY FINDINGS

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7.1   GENERAL

The following key findings are based on an analysis of stakeholder focus group and survey data. They are presented here within the context of the baseline program and youth needs.

a)   Program Accomplishments

There was a great deal of commitment and support shown for the FUTURES Work Experience Program (WEP) by the stakeholders (program participants, employers, academic staff, FUTURES delivery staff and directors/managers). Feedback from the focus groups indicated overall support and enthusiasm, and general comments from the surveys also indicated that the FUTURES program is seen as effective. However, stakeholders also identified a great deal of potential for growth and program improvements.

Along with the value of the work experience, learning work adjustment skills (such as how to fit into the workplace) and communication skills, were rated highly by both participants and employers as being among the most valuable benefits of the program. By comparison, staff and director/manager surveys consistently rated specific vocational/skills training as being key program accomplishments.

b)   The Current Guidelines

One issue that emerged very clearly during the focus group sessions and which was supported by responses to some survey questions, was some lack of understanding of the current guidelines. In fact, **it appeared that the program was being delivered with less creativity and flexibility than it could be because of this. This is further supported by survey responses which recommended delivery approaches and options that are already within the program guidelines.**

7.2   NEEDS OF PARTICIPANTS

Under the current guidelines, the program is **designed** "for youth who are assessed as job ready (in that they) have no significant employment barriers and are ready to go directly into a work experience placement."

Regardless of what is stated in the current guidelines, **the survey data and focus group responses suggest that the program is primarily serving youth who do not meet the definition of job ready.** This is supported by the following:

- delivery staff and directors/managers identified that the needs of participants have increased over time, and that there is an increasing gap between the skills that participants have and those that the labour market requires;

- the labour market is demanding higher level skill sets for entry-level employment, as described in Section 3.0 Labour Market Context for Youth;

- participants and employers identified the acquisition of employability skills as a key value of the program as opposed to vocational skills training; and

- employers reported that they considered most participants were not ready for entry-level employment at the conclusion of their placements. Some commented that youth should have more established career directions and greater "readiness" before commencing their placements.

However, it is also recognized that as a result of the recession, the program is serving some youth who in better economic times would not require this vocational assistance.

7.3 PROGRAM DESIGN

Given that the primary needs of youth and the requirements of the labour market have changed, it calls into question the current program design, particularly the **universal eligibility criteria** as well as the primary focus on placement and training. Some considerations are outlined below:

a) Program Objectives

When asked if they agree that the current program objective (to assist job-ready youth to gain work experience and training/upgrading to improve their long-term attachment to the labour force) is still appropriate, a great majority of director/managers and staff agreed that it was. This response is consistent with their views on the major accomplishments of the program as being specific vocational/skills training.

However, as outlined in <u>Needs of Participants</u> above, the profile of the young people who are participating in the Work Experience Program has changed. Director/manager and staff surveys indicated that more time is being spent on working with participants, especially assessment and individual work and recommended that these areas be further enhanced. Of those directors/managers who did not agree with the current program objective, a majority believed that the objective should be to provide a range of services beginning with pre-employment activities prior to the placement. In the focus groups, the objective of serving the disadvantaged youth cohort was recommended.

The current guidelines define Work Experience as a placement program. There is minimal vocational counselling, provision for a few workshops, and mandatory training plans which emphasize specific skills training. This program design does not appear to be consistent with the current needs of most of the youth being served by the program today, or the services that survey responses otherwise identified as being necessary. This indicates that the program has the potential to be even more effective.

In the focus group sessions, employers stressed that the program should concentrate on teaching job readiness and work adjustment skills ("softer" employability skills, such as how to fit into the workplace and communication skills) in addition to providing the more "technical" skills training. Many indicated that participants require more comprehensive assessment prior to placement in order **to become ready** to participate appropriately.

Learning job-readiness and work adjustment skills, such as how to fit into the workplace and communication skills, were rated highly in the surveys by both participants and employers as being among the most valuable benefits of the program. Participants did not mention technical skills except to say that they would have learned more specific vocational skills if the program were longer in duration.

In summarizing the data collected in this review, despite higher levels of education, it is clear that the needs of participants have increased because of the changing environment and labour market. As a result, most cannot be considered as job-ready when they begin the program. This points to the need to further consider the type of participant who is accessing the program, and the way in which the program design could better fit this participant focus.

b)   Eligibility Criteria

Survey results from staff and directors/managers indicated that over half believe the current eligibility criteria allow access for the youth whom they believe need the program, especially for the Basic option. However, almost all directors/managers and delivery staff indicated they would like to see eligibility criteria changed in some way. Of these, most supported raising the upper age limit for some program options, and reducing qualifying periods for out of school/work. Some staff also supported changing the graduate criteria for the Basic (37 percent) and Guarantee options (20 percent).

Suggested revisions to the current eligibility criteria need to be reconciled with the growing demand for service and greater youth needs. Broadening the eligibility criteria would allow a greater number of youth to become eligible for service, but access to the program could then also become more restricted due to finite resources.

This also raises the question about who the program should ideally be serving, or what type of client group should be targeted. As examined in Section 3.0 Labour Market Context for Youth, and supported by the survey and focus group data, most young people are presenting as more disadvantaged than in the past.

c)   Option Mix and Program Durations

i)   Program Durations

Staff surveys indicate that the average durations for each of the four options is well below the number of weeks allowable under the current guidelines. Responses to a question asking whether the most common duration of programming changed from the 1991/92 fiscal year indicated that the majority remained the same or decreased. When asked what they believed the optimum durations should be, staff recommended durations which are consistent with the present guidelines for the program. Likewise, most stakeholders in the focus groups advocated that durations (at least) remain at the maximum allowable under the current guidelines.

Survey results indicated that most directors/managers are managing the demand for service by limiting the number of weeks on work placements to serve more participants, and by using the Part-time Work/Part-time School and Guarantee options more sparingly. In the focus groups, many stakeholders were highly critical of using reduced program durations to stretch program dollars and thereby accommodate more youth. They were also critical of serving an increased number of participants as a method of controlling measures of administrative efficiency, such as unit costs. **Most focus group participants, regardless of stakeholder type, advocated for more flexibility to adapt dollars and program durations to meet individual participant needs.**

In these sessions, program durations were a central issue due to the growing demand for service. There was a great deal of discussion about how to strike a balance between providing participants with comprehensive and flexible service, while managing program dollars and the growing demand for service.

ii)   Option Mix

Directors/managers reported that during the last two years, while the use of the Basic program option has increased, the use of other options has decreased. While some of this change may result from the need to stretch program dollars to serve more youth, or increased flexibility in the educational component, survey data showed that some directors/managers support changes to the options currently offered.

As the majority of time in the program is devoted to the work placement, it is still seen to be a key component. However, feedback on the needs of participants and accomplishments of the program indicate that the feasibility of more flexible placement options needs to be further considered. The use of options may not currently be driven by the needs of the participants.

d)   Income Support

Survey data show that a significant majority of FUTURES staff and directors/managers identify stipends/wages as very important for participants while in the school component and at the work placement. While the majority of participants indicated that they would not have gone to school during their work placement without the stipend, 32 percent indicated that it was not necessary to their attendance.

Focus groups discussed the necessity of stipends and other supplementary support for participants on the program. There was concern about access for those youth who would not be able to participate in the program without financial assistance. However, some employers cautioned that financial incentives may motivate young people toward the program for the wrong reasons, resulting in its misuse. Baseline data shows that more and more participants are on social assistance, suggesting other potential sources of support.

The necessity and conditions for income support for the academic component needs further consideration. In addition, as a way of partially addressing the concerns raised by some employers, the feasibility and value of tying the training plan more directly to the wage subsidy requires further consideration.

e)   Financial Contributions by Employers

The issue of whether employers should financially contribute to the WEP placements was debated in the focus groups, with varying opinions and levels of support. Some reasoned that employers' contributions would enhance dollars available to the program, and help to strengthen the commitment of employers toward the program. Others reasoned that employers would want more choice in the placement selection if they were providing some of the wages. It was felt that this would have implications for who the program could serve.

Survey data indicates that one quarter of employers who responded would still have participated if they had been required to provide a portion of the participant's wage. Staff and directors/managers were not supportive of unsubsidized placements. **However, a majority in both groups supported employers contributing to the wage, and both of these stakeholder groups felt that a training bonus may be appropriate.**

7.4   PROGRAM FUNCTIONS AND COMPONENTS

In the surveys, directors/managers and staff indicated the amount of time they **actually** spend on various aspects of program delivery as compared to how they would **ideally** like to spend their time. Their responses indicated that these groups would not significantly change the portion of time spent on the various program areas if they had the opportunity to do so. In both groups, pre-employment preparation work with participants ranked the highest in terms of time required.

This section on program functions focuses on the tools which the Work Experience Program uses to deliver the program, as mandated by its design.

a)   Intake/Assessment/Matching

The need for an enhanced assessment process was identified in the focus groups by all stakeholders, with the exception of directors/managers.   Employers and participants highlighted the need to more fully explore clients' interests, barriers to employment and to obtain more information about prospective employers and jobs. There was a great deal of discussion on how the program should balance short-term "survival" needs of new participants with an enhanced career planning process.

Given current program durations, many indicated that the program can only realistically address short term objectives.

These sessions also identified the need for better "matching" of participants with employers.   While employers were seen to contribute a great deal to developing participants' work adjustment skills, survey responses indicated that 45 percent of employers did not hire any participants at the end of their placement. Directors/managers also reported that a major barrier to matching participants with placements is the employers' inability to commit to hiring at the end of the placement. It is interesting to observe the decline in referrals from employers, as outlined by the baseline program data. With more stringent intake and assessment procedures and longer waiting lists, it appears this practice has declined.

Some employers made general comments that youth should have more established career directions or readiness prior to placement and identified a need to ensure better matching between participants and employers in job placements.

Focus group participants made a number of suggestions on how to strengthen the assessment component within the program. Strategies included: harmonizing WEP with the changes and renewal of FUTURES Pre-Employment Preparation Program (PEP); adding a pre-placement component to the program design; and developing a brief trial period in the workplace to ensure appropriate matching before a placement is formalized.

b)   Vocational/Employment Counselling

When surveyed, vocational/employment counselling was seen as particularly helpful and important by participants, employers and academic staff. A great majority of participants responded that they had participated in counselling and the majority indicated that they felt it had helped.

Academic staff identified that counselling would ensure that client option and activity choices would match their career goals better.

The key findings on monitoring/linkages (See Program Design) identify the need for a strengthened case management function within the area of vocational/employment counselling, and warrants further consideration.

c)   Workshops

Most youth who responded to the surveys indicated that they had participated in a workshop before commencing their placements. They rated the effectiveness of group workshops as "passable." Staff surveys indicated that 81 percent provide these workshops for an average of one to three days in length. Thirty-seven percent provide workshops during placement.

There were a wide range of responses from staff suggesting additional topic areas for workshops. In order of preference they were: life skills training; human rights awareness training; use of community resources; future trends; and structured job support/job finding clubs. These responses indicate that staff perceive a need for workshops focusing on work adjustment activities in addition to the more technical skills areas.

When evaluating participant ratings of workshops, in conjunction with the gap in workshop programming identified by the staff, it appears that workshops are useful and should also incorporate work adjustment areas.

d)   Training Plans

In the focus groups, some criticism was expressed that training plans are not always developed by all the stakeholders together, nor referred to during placement. The need to strengthen and better use the training plans was recommended by many - although they were clear that making them better does not mean making them longer.

Survey results indicate that 81 percent of participants remember discussing their training plans with their employers. However, 60 percent indicated the plan was of no help or were neutral about its usefulness. About 46 percent of employers felt the training plan was not useful or felt neutral about its function. (This is not surprising given that the plan focuses on skills training and employers and participants indicated that among the greatest benefits of the program is the attainment of softer skill areas.) Seventy-eight percent of staff indicated that they used a standard format that could be modified for each participant.

The data on the use and effectiveness of training plans indicates that more work needs to be done to explore how to increase their relevance for all stakeholders, primarily the employers and participants. As a tool for documenting expectations, monitoring what is accomplished, enhancing the commitment and understanding of all stakeholders, training plans should no longer be generic documents which focus only on technical or vocational skills training. Instead, the data supports plans which are customized to the needs and situation of each participant and which incorporate the "softer" employability skills that participants and employers see as critical accomplishments of the program.

e)   Placement Monitoring/Linkages

i)   Contact with stakeholders (participants, academic staff, employers and FUTURES staff) during the program

Data on linkages between stakeholders revealed a number of significant findings. Survey data reports that 81 percent of the employers surveyed rated the **frequency of contact** with the FUTURES office during placement as "just right."

Sixty-one percent of the academic staff surveyed had similar ratings. Over one third of academic staff indicated they would prefer more contact with FUTURES staff - the same proportion of respondents who reported having no contact or contact only at the beginning and end of placements. Less than half of academic staff surveyed reported being involved with FUTURES staff to: meet at the outset of the placement; participate in the formulation of an assessment plan; and at the end of the academic placement to review progress and hear recommendations for further academic work.

Reporting from the surveys indicated that the majority of staff monitor plans and participant progress during placement through workplace visits, phone calls to participants/employers, and joint visits.

Although the frequency of contact was rated as appropriate, the data showed dissatisfaction with the more qualitative aspects of these placement contacts. The focus group sessions revealed that participants, academic staff and employers and staff wanted better communications before and during the placement, through joint planning and closer monitoring. Survey data from the participants and academic staff also showed that a significant number of respondents would like to see enhanced communications with FUTURES staff throughout the program.

The need for better matching of participants with employers was raised by both groups in the focus group sessions. This could partially be achieved through enhanced assessment of participants' skills, abilities and interests and greater communication between stakeholders prior to the commencement of placement.

ii) Community contacts/referrals

Survey results show that most staff refer 30 percent of their caseloads to one or more community services as part of the clients' participation in the program over the course of 1991/92. Of the participants responding to the surveys, 17 percent indicated that they had been referred to other programs or services as part of their pre-placement activities. The majority of this group stated that these referrals were either of "no help," or rated them as "not great, not terrible."

In the surveys, staff indicated spending an average of 10 percent of their overall time and resources on working with other agencies and communities. (Directors/managers indicated that on average, centres spend an average of 10 percent of overall time working with other agencies/communities.) Baseline data documents increases in referrals from provincial and municipal social services reflecting growing community linkages. Directors/managers also indicated that they would like to have better links in the community. This is not surprising given the overall low levels of referrals to other community services and the reported dissatisfaction with them by the majority of participants.

Recalling that participants are requiring greater pre-placement assistance, and are primarily not presenting as job-ready, it is clear that the use of referrals and program linkages with other complementary services such as PEP, Youth Employment Counselling Centres, literacy programs, etc. requires further consideration.

iii) Linkages with communities and government

In the focus groups, there was discussion about the need for better coordination between service providers. (For example, a number of directors/managers reported wanting to develop stronger relations with school boards.) This was also referenced in the open-ended survey results.

Within communities, there was a desire to align programs so that they complement and support one another better. In addition, the need for more consistent communications to the field from the Learning and Employment Preparation Branch was recommended.

Leadership from government at the inter-ministerial level, and especially from the LEP Branch, and better coordination between various levels of government was also recommended.

f)   Educational Upgrading

A significant majority of academic staff, FUTURES staff and directors/managers believed that an objective of the FUTURES program is to reconnect youth to education. Academic staff recommended that more emphasis be placed on education and training. FUTURES staff recommended increased monitoring of academic achievements, enabling FUTURES centres to deliver educational upgrading, and allowing credits other than high school. Directors/managers were not as strongly in favour of allowing credits other than high school.

Within the focus groups there was also strong support for the view that the program should promote life-long learning through an educational component.

In the surveys, over half the participants who took part in upgrading reported that they did so because of the FUTURES program. Almost all felt they would continue in school at some point. A significant proportion of these participants obtained secondary school credits. Baseline data shows that three months after program completion, more youth returned to school. This may suggest that even where the program did not establish an immediate linkage between participant and the educational system, it may have become manifest later on.

The baseline data also shows that the majority of participants with less than Grade 8 education are placed into the Basic option. The reasons for this, and their implications, require careful consideration.

The review data supports the belief that the academic upgrading component of FUTURES is of value in reconnecting early school leavers to the education system. This area should be further considered in order to explore activities which could strengthen the component to better meet individual needs. Examples include: allowing a broader range of educational/training opportunities; more flexible scheduling of activities; a greater emphasis on lifelong learning regardless of any specific option category; and an increased monitoring of academic achievements.

g)   Follow-Up Support

In the focus groups, there were frequent comments by participants, employers and academic staff about the need for better follow-up services after completing the program (e.g. further training, apprenticeship, counselling, education). This was especially important for the participants who did not find a job at the end of their placements. This group talked about feeling "dumped" by the program and not sure what to do next. For reporting purposes, many favoured the idea that the follow-up period be extended beyond three months.

Responses on participant surveys revealed that the majority left the FUTURES program with a plan for next steps and that they would return to the FUTURES office to get help if they needed it.

The majority of directors/managers reported that centres follow-up after the placement to provide additional support and to assess client satisfaction with services.

When considering that about one third of the participants who responded to this survey were not successful at securing employment at the end of their placements, and recalling that 17 percent reported being referred to other programs or services as part of the program, it appears that at the conclusion of the program, some of these young people were left without any further support or linkages. This again highlights the need to provide individualized vocational/employment counselling and planning to ensure steps are in place following the placement.
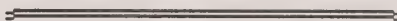
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8.1   DELIVERY NETWORK CONSULTATION AROUND
THE WORK EXPERIENCE REVIEW WORKING REPORT

The FUTURES Work Experience Review Working Report was distributed to the youth service delivery network in May of 1994, and contained sections 1.0 to 7.0 inclusive. A period of consultation followed in which FUTURES staff joined their local colleagues, Branch consultants, and in some cases WEP review Steering Committee members to discuss the key findings. Program deliverers were asked to answer a set of questions posed to them by the Steering Committee. (The questions appear in Appendix 9.8.) These initial discussions and the responses to the questions helped the delivery network familiarize itself with the review report and helped in the planning of the WEP regional meetings which followed.

In their feedback during this initial process, directors/managers and delivery staff indicated that for the most part, they were not surprised by the key findings. In fact, there was a great deal of affirmation of the key findings and the context it presented. Most questions asked did not pertain directly to the report but built on it, demonstrating the complexity involved in developing action plans for changes to the program. A lot of the questions asked of the Steering Committee focused on the next steps and affirmed the need for good communication strategies and opportunities for participation. This initial feedback also affirmed that there are a variety of opinions on how and to what extent the WEP program should be changed. However, there appeared to be some initial agreement on the principles to guide a process of renewal, which the Steering Committee was interested in exploring further.

Following this preliminary consultation with local deliverers of WEP, four two-day regional sessions were held in June, 1994. FUTURES directors/managers and delivery staff were invited to join the Steering Committee and LEP Branch staff to discuss the key findings and begin developing next steps to address them. It was understood that these action plans would evolve in the context of the previous reviews of the Youth Employment Counselling Centres (YECC) Program and Pre-Employment Preparation (PEP) Program, as well as the program review process being developed by the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board (OTAB). To provide this context, participants were given an overview of OTAB's structure, strategic directions and its program review process. There was also an opportunity to discuss and provide input into the guiding principles and essential functions of an ideal Entry/Re-Entry system for OTAB. (See Appendix 9.9)

Participants found the opportunity to have input into the development of next steps for WEP and the ideal Entry/Re-Entry system to be valuable. A provincial summary of the evaluations appears in Appendix 9.10.

8.2   *RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS*

The youth service delivery network, through the regional meetings, made some recommendations for next steps in renewing the WEP program. They are:

i)   Assessment Component

- The assessment component should be enhanced to reflect a holistic approach to working with youth. Creative uses of assessment should be explored and promoted.

ii)   Training Plans, Workshops, Monitoring and Follow-Up

- Training plans should be strengthened to incorporate softer skills and become a blueprint and guide for all stakeholders involved in the placement. Program monitoring, the use of workshops, and follow-up should similarly be improved.

iii)   Communications and Relationships Between Stakeholders, Centres, with Communities

- Communications and linkages between program deliverers and other stakeholders should be enhanced: between partners of training for individual participants; at an interagency and community level; and with funders, other levels of government and OTAB.

iv)   Program Duration and Option Mix

- The current guidelines and the flexibility which exists around program duration and options should be clarified.

v)   Program Objectives, Client Focus and Eligibility

- There is a need to clarify current program objectives and ensure a common understanding. As well, there is a need to revisit and renew these objectives in light of current and emerging youth and labour market needs. This should be examined in the context of complementarity with other programs, at both the design and delivery levels.

- Program outcome measurements and the definition of success should be redefined to reflect restated program objectives.

- Although committed to serving youth, the existing client focus, eligibility criteria around time out of school, and the current parameters around age require further consideration.

vi) Educational Upgrading and Training

- There is strong support for expanding and creating further opportunities and options for educational upgrading and training, as well as for developing stronger linkages with school boards.

vii) Use of Income Support and Employer Contributions

- Further exploration of options around the use of income support and employer contributions is recommended. This includes the use of social support allowances (SSA), the universality of paying stipends to all participants, and financial contributions by employers.

viii) Vocational Counselling

- There is a need for a strengthened vocational counselling and employment preparation component. The functions and principles necessary to support this are outlined in Appendix 10.9. However, this will encompass a review of the complementarity between programs, such as WEP, Pre-Employment Preparation (PEP) Program, and Youth Employment Counselling Centres (YECC) Programs.

8.3 PRINCIPLES AND NEXT STEPS

The regional meetings helped to identify some important principles which will guide the development of next steps for the WEP program, as well as other employment programs serving youth. They are:

- the importance of regional representation and input;

- the value of deliverers coming together to network and share best practices;

- the benefit of involving front-line staff (and wherever possible, youth and employers), directly in the process;

- the benefit of using existing structures and sources (eg provincial organizations serving youth, regular regional meetings, staff meetings at local delivery sites, centre visits by LEP Branch consultants), to continue communications during this process;

- the importance of developing strategies and mechanisms for input, updates and feedback (eg regular updates by those leading the process, LEP Branch visits, staff meetings in centres, etc.);

- the flexibility and creativity to adapt the revised program/service guidelines for each community and participant;

- the necessity of promoting coordinated delivery and a continuum of service; and

- the opportunity to launch pilot projects to test out new ideas for the program.

APPENDIX 9.1

FUTURES WORK EXPERIENCE REVIEW
SURVEY FOR PARTICIPANTS

SECTION 1: INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

To begin with, we are interested in learning a bit about you. Your answers to the following questions will be kept strictly confidential and used only for this review.

1)   **Are you part of any of the following groups?**

☐   Francophone   ☐   Female
☐   Physically disabled   ☐   Social assistance recipient (on Family Benefits or welfare)

2)   **Are you:**

☐   East/South East Asian
☐   South Asian
☐   Black
☐   Native
☐   White
☐   Other (please specify)   _____

3)   **How old are you?**   _____ years old

4)   **How far did you go in school?**

☐   Grade 5-8
☐   Grade 9-10
☐   Grade 11
☐   Grade 12
☐   Grade 13
☐   Some college
☐   College diploma
☐   Some university
☐   University degree
☐   Other (please specify)   _____

_____

5)   Did you have any of these problems before you started your *FUTURES* placement?

☐   Housing problems
☐   Lack of money
☐   Problems with drugs or alcohol
☐   Emotional problems
☐   Physical/health problems
☐   Lack of education
☐   Language problems
☐   Little or no job experience
☐   Others (please specify)   _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6)   Did the *FUTURES* staff try to help you with any of these problems?

☐   Yes   ☐   No

If not, was there anyone else that was able to help you?

☐   Yes   ☐   No

7)   When you first came to the Centre, what were you hoping that the *FUTURES* program could do to help you?

☐ Help me learn to find and keep a job
☐ Help me to go back to school
☐ Pay me while I am in training
☐ Help me figure out what kind of job I could do
☐ Have someone to talk to while I am getting help
☐ Get some on the job training
☐ Learning how to handle myself at work and fit in
☐ Other (Please specify)   _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION 2: PROGRAMMING

We are interested in your work placement with FUTURES, how you think the program helped you, and any ideas you have on how this program could become better.

PRE-PLACEMENT ACTIVITIES

8)   **Which of the following activities did you do at the Centre before you began your work placement(s)?**

(Please check off all that you were involved in, but do not include PEP activities.)

☐   Counselling or talking to the *FUTURES* staff
☐   Group workshops
☐   Referrals to other programs to help you to work on other problems
☐   Writing a training plan with the *FUTURES* staff
☐   Other (if there were other things you were doing, what were they?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9)   **How good do you think these things were in helping you get ready for your work placement?**

Please circle either number 1, 2 or 3, where 1 means that you think the activity helped you a lot, 3 means you think the activity didn't help you at all, and 2 means the activity wasn't great, but wasn't terrible. Do not circle if you did not participate in the activity.

```
                No
Helped.................Help
```

1 2 3   Counselling or discussions with the *FUTURES* staff

1 2 3   Group workshops

1 2 3   Referrals to other programs to help you work on other problems

1 2 3   Writing a training plan with the *FUTURES* staff

1 2 3   Other (fill this in only if you added an activity to question 8)

WORK EXPERIENCE OPTIONS

10)   How many weeks were you on your work placement?_____

11)   When you began your work placement, did you talk to your boss about your training plan?

                    ☐   Yes   ☐   No

PLACEMENT QUESTIONS

12)   While you were at work, how often did you talk to any of the *FUTURES* staff about how things were going on your placement?

      ☐   About once a week
      ☐   About once every two weeks
      ☐   About once a month
      ☐   At the beginning and end of my work placement
      ☐   One time
      ☐   None

13)   If you had your choice, how often would you have liked to talk to the *FUTURES* staff about how things were going in your placement?

      ☐   About once a week
      ☐   About once every two weeks
      ☐   About once a month
      ☐   At the beginning and end of my work placement
      ☐   One time
      ☐   None

14)   **If you had any of these things in your work placement, did they help you?**

Please circle the number 1, 2 or 3 for each of the following training areas. (1 means you feel you learned a lot, 3 means you feel it didn't help you very much and 2 means you learned some things, but not a lot.)

learned   learned
a lot.............not much

1   2   3   Training in all parts of the job (for example, how to operate a cash register, take a customer order, write down a phone message, etc.)

1   2   3   Learning about how to fit in the workplace (for example, coming to work on time, learning how to talk to your co-workers, wearing appropriate things to work, etc.)

1   2   3   Job experience which you can now put on your resume, to help you to find another job.

1   2   3   Information on how to look for a job, fill in an application, go for an interview, etc.

1   2   3   Communication skills (for example, how to get along with people you work with, how to express yourself, etc.)

1   2   3   Problem-solving skills (for example, how to deal with problems at work)

1   2   3   Skills in dealing with authority (for example, how to feel comfortable talking to your boss without getting angry or worried, etc.)

15)   **If you could have been in your work placement longer, what else would you have learned?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

ACADEMIC UPGRADING

Please answer the following 4 questions only if you were in school as part of your FUTURES program, under either the Guaranteed or Part-time school/Part-time work options. If you didn't go to school, please go to question 18.

16) **If you had not participated in the *FUTURES* program, do you think that you would still have gone back to school?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

17) **Do you think that you will continue on in school, either now, or at some point in the future?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

18) **Would you have gone to school during your work placement if you couldn't get paid?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

EMPLOYMENT

19) **Did you get a job after the FUTURES work placement?**

☐ Yes, with the *FUTURES* employer

☐ Yes, but with another employer

☐ No

NEXT STEPS

20) **Now that you have completed your *FUTURES* program, do you have a plan of what you are going to do next?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, are you working with a Counsellor or an agency to help you to make a new plan?

☐ Yes ☐ No

21) Would you return to the *FUTURES* Centre to get help, If you needed It?

        ☐   Yes   ☐   No

SECTION 3: GENERAL COMMENTS

22) Are there any additional comments you would like to make about the *FUTURES* Work Experience Program, or how It could be changed to help ds more?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX 9.2

FUTURES WORK EXPERIENCE REVIEW
SURVEY FOR EMPLOYERS

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR EMPLOYMENT SETTING

Please indicate the type of employment setting and the number of employees in your organization:

1) a) TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT SETTING:

   ☐ Private sector
   ☐ Public sector
   ☐ Non-profit
   ☐ Municipality

   b) NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:

   ☐ Less than 20
   ☐ 20 - 50
   ☐ 51 - 499
   ☐ More than 500

PROVISION OF TRAINING UNDER THE *FUTURES* WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

The following questions focus on various aspects of the placement training provided through the FUTURES Work Experience Program.

2 a) **How many *FUTURES* trainees have you had over the past year?** _____

b) **On average, how many weeks was a trainee on a placement with you?** _____

c) **Was this duration appropriate for the type of training required by the trainee?**
   Please choose one response only.

   ☐ The duration was appropriate.
   ☐ The timeframe did not allow the trainee to become sufficiently trained for entry-level employment.
   ☐ The training period could have been reduced and still achieve the training objectives.
   ☐ Other (please specify) _____

   _____

3) In your opinion, what do you believe was accomplished by the trainee(s) during placement?

Please rank-order your responses, with 1 being the major area of accomplishment.
Do not rank-order items which are not relevant to your setting.

_____ Skill training in career of choice
_____ Work adjustment training (orientation to work environments and workplace protocols)
_____ Increased access to lasting employment through job experience
_____ Interpersonal/communication skills
_____ Problem-solving/conflict resolution
_____ Dealing with authority
_____ Other (please specify) _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4   a)   On average, did you consider your trainees to be ready for entry-level employment in your organization at the conclusion of the placement? *Please choose one response only.*

☐ Trainees were always ready
☐ Most trainees were ready
☐ Some trainees were ready
☐ None of the trainees were ready

b)   What percentage of trainees did you hire at the end of the placement?

_____ %

5) Was the training plan useful in helping you work with and guide the placement for the participant?

Please rate your answer on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is extremely useful, 7 is ineffective and 4 is neutral.

Useful.....................................Ineffective

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

RELATIONSHIP WITH *FUTURES* STAFF

6) What was the frequency of your contact with the *FUTURES* staff?

☐ Approximately once per week
☐ Approximately every two to three weeks
☐ Approximately once a month
☐ At the beginning and end of the placement
☐ One meeting was held
☐ No contact with *FUTURES* staff

7) In your opinion, was the frequency of contact appropriate in helping to facilitate the placement?

☐ It was just right
☐ I would have preferred more contact
☐ Less contact was required

PROGRAMMING ISSUES

8 a) If the program had required that you provide a portion of the trainee's wages during the placement, would you still have participated in the program?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

b) *Please state your reasons why or why not:*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9   a)   From the point of view of your organization, please rank order the usefulness of the *FUTURES* program.

Please rate your response on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means extremely useful and 7 means not at all useful.

<div align="center">

Extremely   Not
Useful.................................Useful

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

</div>

b)   Do you anticipate requesting other trainees from this program sometime in the future?

<div align="center">

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Unsure

</div>

10)   Do you have any other comments or suggestions to make about the *FUTURES* Work Experience Program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX 9.3

FUTURES WORK EXPERIENCE REVIEW
SURVEY FOR INSTRUCTORS OR TUTORS OF ACADEMIC UPGRADING

SECTION 1: INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ACADEMIC SETTING

1)   *Please indicate which of the following programs you work in:*

☐   Regular secondary school program
☐   Alternative secondary school program offered by Boards of Education
☐   Tutoring individual students involved in correspondence courses
☐   Tutoring students involved in correspondence courses in a group setting
☐   Community college programs
☐   Other (please specify)   _____

_____

2)   **How long have you been working with students who are in the *FUTURES* Work Experience Program (WEP)?**

Years _____   Months _____

3)   **When are the classes or tutorials offered for the programs you work with?**

☐   Day classes only
☐   Evening classes only
☐   Day and evening classes
☐   Flexible to suit the students' schedules

4)   **Over the past academic year, approximately how many students on the *FUTURES* program have you taught/tutored?**

Number _____

5)   **Over the past academic year, approximately how many of these students attained credit(s) during the *FUTURES* program?**

Percentage _____%

6) On average, how many hours of classroom time and/or tutoring do you provide each of your *FUTURES* students per week?

Number of hours _____

SECTION 2: PROGRAMMING

RELATIONSHIPS WITH *FUTURES* STAFF

7) *For each of the activities listed below, please indicate whether you are involved or not with the staff at the FUTURES office.*

	YES	NO
• Meeting with *FUTURES* staff at the outset of the academic placements, to discuss academic goals for the *FUTURES'* students, etc.		
• Joint assessment of participant needs for academic upgrading.		
• Regular monitoring by the *FUTURES* staff, for updates on the students' performances, etc.		
• Meeting with *FUTURES* staff at the end of the academic placements, to review progress, obtain results and hear recommendations for further academic work.		
• Other (please specify)		

8) What was the frequency of your contact with the *FUTURES* staff during the participant's placement?

☐ Approximately once per week
☐ Approximately every two to three weeks
☐ Approximately once a month
☐ At the beginning and end of the placement
☐ One meeting was held
☐ No contact with *FUTURES* staff

9   In your opinion, was the frequency of contact appropriate in helping to facilitate the placement?

    ☐   It was just right
    ☐   I would have preferred more contact
    ☐   Less contact was required

IMPACT OF PARTICIPATING IN THE *FUTURES* PROGRAM

10)   Do you believe that an objective of the Work Experience Program is to reconnect *FUTURES* participants to education?

                    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, how might the provision of Part-time/Part-time and Guaranteed options be improved to strengthen this reconnection?

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION 3: GENERAL COMMENTS

11)   Do you have any other comments or suggestions to make concerning the *FUTURES* Work Experience Program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX 9.4

FUTURES WORK EXPERIENCE REVIEW
SURVEY FOR CENTRE STAFF

SECTION 1: EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF YOUTH IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The first set of questions ask about the needs of youth, as well as the current and emerging labour market trends, in your community.

1)   In your opinion, have the following employment barriers facing disadvantaged youth in your community increased, decreased, or remained the same over the last two years?

	INCREASED	DECREASED	REMAINED THE SAME
a) Basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, transportation, child care)	☐	☐	☐
b) Psychological/Behavioural (emotional, substance abuse, self-esteem, attitudes, developmental problems, etc.)	☐	☐	☐
c) Physiological (disability)	☐	☐	☐
d) Basic education (reading, writing, math)	☐	☐	☐
e) Job-oriented skills (job search, job goals, experience, work attitude, attendance, appearance)	☐	☐	☐
f) Cultural (prejudice, racism)	☐	☐	☐
g) Language skills for non-English-speaking or non-French-speaking clients	☐	☐	☐

2) *Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements, on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means you strongly agree, 7 means you strongly disagree and the midpoint 4 is neither agree nor disagree.*

		Strongly Agree..						Strongly Disagree
a)	Higher skill demands in the labour market are placing our clients at a greater disadvantage.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b)	We are finding that clients are becoming more difficult to place in employment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c)	Lower skill level jobs are still readily available in our community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d)	I am concerned that the services provided by our Centre have resulted in temporary rather than lasting employment solutions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e)	It is clear to me that increasingly, youth need to stay in school longer in order to become successful in the workforce.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f)	Employment problems facing youth in my community are more serious than they were two years ago.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3) **Do you agree that the current WE focus on "job-ready" youth, according to the guidelines, is still appropriate, given client needs and the current labour market demands?**

Please rate your answer on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means you completely agree, 7 means you completely disagree and 4 is neutral.

Strongly Agree..Disagree Strongly

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4)   If you do not agree that the current WE focus on "job-ready" youth is appropriate, what do you believe
        the focus ought to be?

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

5)   Under the current *FUTURES* guidelines, the objective of the WE program is to assist job ready youth
        to gain work experience and training/upgrading to improve their long-term attachment to the labour
        force. In your opinion, is this objective still appropriate, given client needs and the current labour
        market demands?

        *Again, please rate your answer on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means you completely agree, 7 means you
        completely disagree and 4 is neutral.*

                        Strongly   Strongly
                         Agree..Disagree

                            1   2   3   4   5   6   7

6)   If you do not agree with the current objective of the WE program, what do you believe the objective
        should be?

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

7)   **In your opinion, how well do the eligibility criteria allow access for the youth who need this program, given the current and emerging labour market demands?**

For each option, please rate your answer on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means you strongly believe it does, 7 means you strongly believe it does not and 4 is neutral.

	Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
Basic Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Part-Time/Part-Time Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Guaranteed Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Enhanced Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8a)   *If you would like to see revisions in the eligibility criteria, please indicate the areas you would like to see changed:*

	BASIC	GO	PT/PT
• Age criteria	☐	☐	☐
• Criteria for length of time out of school	☐	☐	☐
• Criteria for length of time out of work	☐	☐	☐
• Graduate (educational level)	☐	☐	☐

b)   *Please be specific on how you would want these criteria to be changed.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION 2: WORK EXPERIENCE OPTIONS

The following questions focus on your use of the Work Experience, for clients on your caseload.

PROGRAM DURATIONS

9)   **Currently, what is the most common program duration? (In weeks)**

    Basic Option   _____

    Part-time/Part-time   _____

    Guaranteed Option   _____

    Enhanced Option   _____

10)   **Did the most common duration of programming change from the 1991/92 fiscal year?**

	INCREASED	DECREASED	REMAINED THE SAME
Basic Option	☐	☐	☐
Part-time/Part-time	☐	☐	☐
Guaranteed Option	☐	☐	☐
Enhanced Option	☐	☐	☐

11)   **In your opinion, from the perspective of program design, what would the <u>optimal</u> program duration for most clients be in each of the options?**

    Basic Option   _____

    Part-time/Part-time   _____

    Guaranteed Option   _____

    Enhanced   _____

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

12) **What do you believe is currently accomplished by clients within the WE program?**

Please rank-order your responses for each WE option, beginning with 1 (the accomplishment with the most impact). Do not rank-order items which have not been accomplished.

	BASIC	PT/PT	GO
• Workplace orientation/protocols			
• Educational upgrading			
• Increased access to lasting employment			
• Increased understanding of life-long learning as a valuable concept			
• Specific vocational/skills training			
• Skills and strategies in job seeking, including resume writing, interviewing, etc.			
• Interpersonal/communication skills			
• Problem-solving/conflict resolution			
• Dealing with authority			
• Other (please specify)			

13)   **Ideally, in your opinion, what are the most valuable accomplishments that the WE program ought to provide clients (e.g. may be different than what is currently being accomplished)?**

Please rank-order your responses for each option, beginning with 1 (the most valuable accomplishment). Do not rank-order items which do not fall under certain options (e.g. educational upgrading).

	BASIC	PT/PT	GO
• Workplace orientation/protocols			
• Educational upgrading			
• Increased access to lasting employment			
• Increased understanding of life-long learning as a valuable concept			
• Specific vocational/skills training			
• Skills and strategies in job seeking, including resume writing, interviewing, etc.			
• Interpersonal/communication skills			
• Problem-solving/conflict resolution			
• Dealing with authority			
• Other (please specify)			

ACADEMIC PORTION OF PROGRAM

14)   **Do you believe that an objective of the Work Experience Program is to reconnect *FUTURES* clients to education?**

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, how might the provision of Part-time/Part-time and Guaranteed options be improved to strengthen this reconnection?

_____

_____

_____

_____

15) **How important do you think it is for clients to receive payment while attending school?**

Please rate each of the following on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is extremely important, and 7 is unimportant.

	Extremely Important..Unimportant						
Stipends for the school portion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Wages for the work placement portion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(Please specify) _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

OTHER

16) *Please indicate whether you support each of the following concepts. Rate your answers on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 indicates you strongly support, 7 indicates you do not support at all, and 4 is neutral.*

____ The development of unsubsidized placements within the FUTURES program

____ The development of partially subsidized placements within the FUTURES program

____ The use of financial contributions by employers

____ Other (please specify) _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION 3: PROGRAMMING

The following questions focus on the activities which your Centre provides clients through-out the process of the Work Experience Program.

17) **What percentage of your overall time and resources go into each the following activities?**

___% Intake/Assessment/Goal-setting, individual counselling or consultation, training plan development, client advocacy

___% Group workshops

___% Working with, and referrals to, other agencies and your community, including school board liaisons

___% Administration, staff meetings/professional development

___% Placement activities, other employer activities (outreach, marketing, etc.), monitoring during placements

___% Follow-up after exit

___% Other (please specify) _____

_____

18) *If there has been a significant shift in the amount of time you are spending on each function over the last two years, please indicate how and why it has changed.*

_____

_____

_____

19) **We are interested in knowing whether you think that the emphasis on how you spend your time should change.**

Please indicate the percentage of time you would like to spend on the following activities.

___% Intake/Assessment/Goal-setting, individual counselling or consultation, training plan development, client advocacy

___% Group workshops

___% Working with, and referrals to, other agencies and your community, including school board liaisons

___% Administration, staff meetings/professional development

___% Placement activities, other employer activities (outreach, marketing, etc.), monitoring during placements

___% Follow-up after exit

___% Other (please specify) _____

_____

INTAKE/ASSESSMENT PROCESS

If you do not work with clients in the intake/assessment phase, please skip to Question 24 of this survey.

20) The *FUTURES* design requires that you make determinations about clients' eligibility for *FUTURES*, their appropriateness for the WE program, and the selection of the most suitable component or option.

Please indicate which of the following activities you use to do this.

☐ Eligibility check
☐ Basic needs assessment
☐ Identification of client expectations and interests
☐ Assessment of skills and abilities
☐ Vocational planning and goal-setting
☐ Exploration of community resources for referral, as appropriate
☐ Match with employer needs
☐ Others (please specify) _____

_____

_____

21) In addition to the activities listed above, are there other parts to the intake/assessment process which you feel would be of value to your clients, or that you think the program design should emphasize?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

22) How often do your clients receive vocational and/or clinical testing as part of the intake/assessment process?

☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often

If they are used, how are they administered?

☐ Internally ☐ Referred out

23) **If these assessments are not used for clients on your caseload, what are the reasons for this?**

☐   This additional information is not required in order to complete intake/assessment
☐   Financial resources are not available for these assessments to be purchased on a regular basis
☐   Other (please specify) _____

_____

_____

COMMUNITY REFERRALS

24) **Which of the following types of services do you refer your clients to?**

Please rank-order the following, with 1 being the most frequently referred-to service. Do not rate services you do not use.

_____   Welfare office or other referrals for financial assistance

_____   Personal counselling support through mental health agencies, or other counselling services

_____   Assistance with housing

_____   Group counselling in your community

_____   Social/recreational activities

_____   Addictions counselling

_____   Other (please specify)   _____

_____

_____

25) **Over the course of the last year, approximately what percentage of clients on your caseload did you refer to one or more community resources as part of their participation in WEP?**

_____%

WORKSHOP QUESTIONS

26) *Please indicate when you provide workshops in your Centre.*

    ☐   Pre-placement workshops: Length in days _____

    ☐   Workshops during placements: Length in days _____

    ☐   Post-placement workshops: Length in days _____

    ☐   Other (please specify) _____

    ☐   Length in days _____

27) *Please indicate which of the following topic areas are covered in the workshops offered by your Centre and the percentage of time allotted for each of them.*

____% Job search techniques - completing job applications forms, preparing resumes, job interview preparation, job search strategies.

____% Career clarification - work and values, interests and aptitude, career exploration, decision making skills, goal setting.

____% Job maintenance - budgeting, problem solving, assertiveness, time management, labour rights, employer/employee expectations.

____% Job safety.

____% Other (please specify) _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

28)   **Are you able to identify any additional workshop or topic areas which would be of value to clients in the WE program?**

If so, please indicate them below, in order of perceived importance.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

TRAINING PLANS

29)   *Please indicate how training plans are developed for your clients.*

☐   A standard format is used and modified with each client.
☐   The training plans are written by the client, with assistance from staff.
☐   The training plans are developed in the workshop.
☐   Other (please specify) _____

_____

_____

30)   **How useful do you feel the training plans are in facilitating the process for the client, your Centre, the employer, and others who are involved?**

Please rate your answer on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is extremely useful, 7 is ineffective and 4 is neutral.

Useful...Ineffective

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

31) **Are there things which should be added or changed to the training plan process to make it more useful?**

If so, please indicate your suggested changes.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

CONTACT DURING PLACEMENT

32) **On average during placement, how frequently are you in contact with clients or employers?**

	CLIENT	EMPLOYER
Once a week	☐	☐
Once every two weeks	☐	☐
Two times per placement	☐	☐
Less than twice per placement	☐	☐

33) **How do you monitor training plans and the clients' progress during placement?**

Please rank-order the methods you use, with 1 being most frequently used. Do not rank those which you do not use.

____ Phone calls to clients

____ Phone calls to employers

____ Workplace visits

____ Exit interviews with clients

____ Exit interviews with employers

____ Joint interviews with clients and employers

____ Contact with client on pay-day

____ Monitoring in workshops

____ None of the above

____ Other (please specify) _____

SECTION 5: GENERAL COMMENTS

34)   Are there any specific recommendations for change you would like to make to the design of the Work
        Experience Program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

35)   Are there any additional comments you would like to make about the Work Experience Program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX 9.5

FUTURES WORK EXPERIENCE REVIEW
SURVEY FOR DIRECTORS AND MANAGERS

SECTION 1: EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF YOUTH IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The first set of questions ask about the needs of youth, as well as the current and emerging labour market trends, in your community.

1)   **In your opinion, have the following employment barriers facing disadvantaged youth in your community increased, decreased, or remained the same over the last two years?**

	INCREASED	DECREASED	REMAINED THE SAME
a) Basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, transportation, child care)	☐	☐	☐
b) Psychological/Behavioural (emotional, substance abuse, self-esteem, attitudes, developmental problems, etc.)	☐	☐	☐
c) Physiological (disability)	☐	☐	☐
d) Basic education (reading, writing, math)	☐	☐	☐
e) Job-oriented skills (job search, job goals, experience, work attitude, attendance, appearance)	☐	☐	☐
f) Cultural (prejudice, racism)	☐	☐	☐
g) Language skills for non-English-speaking or non-French-speaking participants	☐	☐	☐

2)   *Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements, on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means you strongly agree, 7 means you strongly disagree and the midpoint 4 is neither agree nor disagree.*

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="7">Strongly
Agree..Disagree</td></tr>
<tr><td>a)</td><td>Higher skill demands in the labour market are placing our participants at a greater disadvantage.</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><td>b)</td><td>We are finding that participants are becoming more difficult to place in employment.</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><td>c)</td><td>Lower skill level jobs are still readily available in our community.</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><td>d)</td><td>I am concerned that the services provided by our Centre have resulted in temporary rather than lasting employment solutions.</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><td>e)</td><td>It is clear to me that increasingly, youth need to stay in school longer in order to become successful in the workforce.</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><td>f)</td><td>Employment problems facing youth in my community are more serious than they were two years ago.</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr>
</table>

3)   **Do you agree that the current WE focus on "job-ready" youth, according to the guidelines, is still appropriate given participant needs and the current labour market demands?**

Please rate your answer on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means you completely agree, 7 means you completely disagree and 4 is neutral.

Strongly
Agree...Disagree

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

4)   **If you do not agree that the current WE focus on "job-ready" youth is appropriate, what do you believe the focus ought to be?**

_____

_____

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

5)   Under the current *FUTURES* guidelines, the objective of the WE program is to assist job ready youth to gain work experience and training/upgrading to improve their long-term attachment to the labour force. In your opinion, is this objective still appropriate, given participant needs and the current labour market demands?

Again, please rate your answer on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means you completely agree, 7 means you completely disagree and 4 is neutral.

<div align="center">

Strongly   Strongly
Agree..Disagree

1   2   3   4   5   6   7

</div>

6)   If you do not agree with the current objective of the WE program, what do you   believe the objective should be?

_____

_____

_____

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

7)   In your opinion, how well do the eligibility criteria allow access for the youth who need this program, given the current and emerging labour market demands?

For each option, please rate your answer on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means you strongly believe it does, 7 means you strongly believe it does not and 4 is neutral.

	Strongly Agree						Strongly Disagree
Basic Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Part-Time/Part-Time Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Guaranteed Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Enhanced Option	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8a) *If you would like to see revisions in the eligibility criteria, please indicate the areas you would like to see changed:*

	BASIC	GO	PT/PT
• Age criteria	☐	☐	☐
• Criteria for length of time out of work	☐	☐	☐
• Criteria for length of time out of school	☐	☐	☐
• Graduate criteria (educational level)	☐	☐	☐

b) *Please be specific on how you want these criteria to be changed.*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION 2: WORK EXPERIENCE OPTIONS

The following questions focus on your use of the Work Experience Options.

9) **What is the average number of hours worked by your participants on placement, per week?**

(For PT/PT and GO, include school work)

	BASIC	PT/PT	GO
Less than 25 hours	☐	☐	☐
26 to 30 hours	☐	☐	☐
31 to 35 hours	☐	☐	☐
36 to 41 hours	☐	☐	☐
More than 45 hours	☐	☐	☐

PROGRAM DURATIONS

10)   **Currently, what is the most common program duration?** (in weeks)

Basic Option   _____

Part-time/Part-time   _____

Guaranteed Option   _____

Enhanced Option   _____

11)   **Did the most common duration of programming change from the 1991/92 fiscal year?**

	INCREASED	DECREASED	REMAINED THE SAME
Basic Option	☐	☐	☐
Part-time/Part-time	☐	☐	☐
Guaranteed Option	☐	☐	☐
Enhanced Option	☐	☐	☐

12)   **In your opinion, from the perspective of program design, what would the <u>optimal</u> program duration for participants be in each of the options?**

Basic Option   _____

Part-time/Part-time   _____

Guaranteed Option   _____

Enhanced   _____

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

13)   What do you believe is currently accomplished by most participants within the WE program?

Please rank-order your responses for each WE option, beginning with 1 (the accomplishment with the most impact). Do not rank-order items which have not been accomplished.

	BASIC	PT/PT	GO
• Increased understanding of life-long learning as a valuable concept			
• Workplace orientation/protocols			
• Educational upgrading			
• Increased access to lasting employment			
• Specific vocational/skills training			
• Skills and strategies in job seeking, including resume writing, interviewing, etc.			
• Interpersonal/communication skills			
• Problem-solving/conflict resolution			
• Dealing with authority			
• Other (please specify)			

14) **Ideally, In your opinion, what are the most valuable accomplishments that the WE program ought to provide most participants (e.g. may be different than what Is currently being accomplished)?**

Please rank-order your responses for each option, beginning with 1 (the most valuable accomplishment). Do not rank-order items which do not fall under certain options (e.g. educational upgrading).

	BASIC	PT/PT	GO
• Increased understanding of life-long learning as a valuable concept			
• Workplace orientation/protocols			
• Educational upgrading			
• Increased access to lasting employment			
• Specific vocational/skills training			
• Skills and strategies in job seeking, including resume writing, interviewing, etc.			
• Interpersonal/communication skills			
• Problem-solving/conflict resolution			
• Dealing with authority			
• Other (please specify)			

DEMAND FOR SERVICE

15) *Please indicate how the demand for service was managed over the last year, by rank-ordering the following activities, beginning with 1 (the most-used strategy). In cases where the strategy is not used at all, do not rank-order.*

____ Served as many participants as possible within our allocation by limiting the number of weeks available

____ Used the Part-time/Part-time and Guaranteed options more sparingly

____ Decreased the number of hours per week on placement

____ Referred some prospective participants to other appropriate agencies and services while on the waiting list

____ Other (please specify) _____

16) How does your *FUTURES* WEP staff work with participants while they wait for a spot to become available in the program, and/or they are matched with an employer?

☐ Participants are contacted only after space becomes available in the program.
☐ Staff provide counselling/consultation/support to the participants to assist them while they wait.
☐ Participants are referred to other community resources, to work on other areas of need while they wait.
☐ The Centre provides workshops for these participants.
☐ Other (please specify) _____

_____

_____

17) In addition to the current level of support available to participants waiting for placements, are there any other things you would like to see implemented?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

OPTION MIX

18) Has your use of the various options (options mix) changed over the past two years?

	INCREASED	DECREASED	REMAINED THE SAME
Basic Option	☐	☐	☐
Part-time/Part-time	☐	☐	☐
Guaranteed Option	☐	☐	☐
Enhanced Option	☐	☐	☐

19)   **Would you support changing, adding to or deleting any of the current options available in the guidelines?**

                          ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Please explain _____

_____

_____

_____

ACADEMIC PORTION OF THE PROGRAM

20)   *Please indicate the percentage of participants involved in each type of educational upgrading for the Guaranteed and Part-time/Part-time options during the 1991/92 fiscal year.*

	PT/PT	GO
• Independent learning through ILC	%	%
• Classroom learning in a regular secondary school setting	%	%
• Alternative education (eg adult school)	%	%
• Teachers or tutors working directly with participants in your Centre	%	%

21)   **What percentage of your participants enrolled in the Part-time/Part-time and Guaranteed options in 1991/92 obtained any high school credits?**

	PT/PT	GO
• Independent learning through ILC	%	%
• Classroom learning in a regular secondary school setting	%	%
• Alternative education (eg adult school)	%	%
• Teachers or tutors working directly with participants in your Centre	%	%

22)   What percentage of your participants enrolled in the Part-time/Part-time and Guaranteed options in 1991/92 met the objective of obtaining <u>three</u> high school credits?

	PT/PT	GO
• Independent learning through ILC	%	%
• Classroom structure in a regular secondary school setting	%	%
• Alternative education (eg adult school)	%	%
• Teachers or tutors working directly with participants in your Centre	%	%

23)   Do you believe that an objective of the Work Experience Program is to reconnect *FUTURES* participants to education?

☐   Yes   ☐   No

If yes, how might the provision of Part-time/Part-time and Guaranteed options be   improved   to strengthen this reconnection?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

24)   How important do you think it is for participants to receive payment while attending school?

Please rate each of the following on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is extremely important, and 7 is unimportant.

	Extremely Important.. Unimportant
Stipends for the school portion	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Wages for the placement portion	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Other	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(Please specify)	_____

25) **For participants attending school through the Part-time/Part-time and Guaranteed options, what happens to the academic portion during the summer months?**

Please rank-order your response in terms of frequency, beginning with 1 (most frequent).

_____ Participants attend summer school

_____ Participants continue to study through correspondence courses

_____ Participants cease academic studies in the summer

_____ Continue at regular place of study

_____ Other (please specify) _____

_____

_____

SECTION 3: PROGRAMMING

The following questions focus on the activities which the Program provides participants through-out the process of the Work Experience Program.

PROGRAM FOLLOW-UP

26) **In addition to collecting the follow-up statistics for Ministry reporting purposes, how is this information used by your Centre?**

☐ It is not used for internal purposes.
☐ It is used to track program outcomes.
☐ It is used to obtain feedback from participants about their program experiences.
☐ It is used as part of broader program evaluation activities.
☐ Other (please specify) _____

_____

_____

27) **In addition to recording the employment/educational status, which of the following (if any) does your Centre include in the follow-up after exit?**

☐ Participant satisfaction with program or service
☐ Additional support or referrals
☐ Other (please specify) _____

_____

PROGRAM FUNCTIONS

28)   **What percentage of overall time and resources go into each of the following activities in your WE program?**

    ____% Intake/Assessment/Goal-setting, individual counselling or consultation, training plan development, participant advocacy

    ____% Group workshops

    ____% Working with, and referrals to, other agencies and your community, including school board liaisons

    ____% Administration, staff meetings/professional development

    ____% Placement activities, other employer activities (outreach, marketing, etc.), monitoring during placements

    ____% Follow-up after exit

    ____% Other (please specify) _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

29)   *If there has been a significant shift in the amount of time and resources allocated to each function over the last two years, please indicate how and why it has changed.*

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

30) **We are interested in knowing whether you think that the emphasis on time and resource allocation should change.**

Please indicate the percentage of time you would like to see the program spend on the following activities.

____% Intake/Assessment/Goal-setting, individual counselling or consultation, training plan development, participant advocacy

____% Group workshops

____% Working with, and referrals to, other agencies and your community, including school board liaisons

____% Administration, staff meetings/professional development

____% Placement activities, other employer activities (outreach, marketing, etc.), monitoring during placements

____% Follow-up after exit

____% Other (please specify) _____

_____

_____

EMPLOYER RELATIONS

31) **What difficulties (if any) does the program face in matching participants with employer once the intake/assessment has been completed?**

Please rank-order, omitting the answers which are not relevant for your Centre.

____ Employers are unable to commit to hiring trainees following the placement.

____ There are often   difficulties matching participants' occupational interests with available training opportunities.

____ Internal demands placed on Centre (e.g. volume of participants, etc.) mean that participants must wait.

____ Limited spaces available for WEP placements mean that participants must wait.

____ Other (please specify) _____

_____

_____

<u>SPECIAL SUPPORT ALLOWANCES</u>

32)   *Please provide a breakdown of how your Special Allowance allocation is distributed.*

        ____% Childcare

        ____% Transportation

        ____% Accommodation

        ____% Tuition

        ____% Other (please specify)   _____

                       _____

                       _____

                       _____

                       _____

33)   *Please indicate any other expenses which you believe should be covered through FUTURES.*

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

        _____

<u>OTHER</u>

34)   *Please indicate whether you support each of the following concepts. Rate your answers on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 indicates you strongly support, 7 indicates you do not support at all, and 4 is neutral.*

        ____   The development of unsubsidized placements within the FUTURES program

        ____   The development of placements partially subsidized by employers

        ____   The use of employer contributions such as training bonuses

        ____   Other (please specify)   _____

                       _____

                       _____

                       _____

SECTION 4: GENERAL COMMENTS

35)   **Are there any specific recommendations for change you would like to make to design of the Work Experience Program?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

36)   **Are there any additional comments you would like make about the Work Experience Program?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX 9.6

FUTURES WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM REVIEW
FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS
PARTICIPANT SESSION

1)   Could you tell us a bit about the things that you felt that you needed in the way of training, going to school, or finding and keeping a job, which brought you to the FUTURES program? Maybe you could also talk about why you feel you needed these things.

Probes   • personal needs (personal problems, housing issues, etc.)
         • earning enough money to manage independently
         • housing
         • future economic trends

2)   Of these needs and problems we've been talking about, what do you think that the FUTURES Work Experience Program is helping with?

Probes   • training for a job
         • getting a job
         • building self-confidence
         • helping to work through personal or work-related problems
         • helping to figure out the next step at the end of the placement

3)   Of these needs and problems we've been talking about, what do you think that the FUTURES Work Experience Program is not helping with?

Probes   • training for a job
         • getting a job
         • building self-confidence
         • helping to work through personal or work-related problems
         • helping to figure out the next step at the end of the placement

4)   How could the FUTURES Work Experience Program be changed to better meet these needs that we have been talking about?

Probes • would you recommend this program to a friend?
        • program objectives
        • one on one counselling or discussion
        • workshops
        • placement with employer
        • help with planning for the future
        • academic upgrading
        • keeping the job at your placement after the program is over
        • timeframe of program
        • amount of time spent in things like the workshops, work and school placements.

5)   After you complete your placement (If you haven't already), what do you want to do next?

Probes • community linkages - who will help you with this plan?
        • development of ongoing plan for your career/education/training/employment
        • ongoing linkages with FUTURES or YECC office
        • finding and keeping a job (continuing with placement employer or another employer)
        • continue with educational upgrading (unsubsidized)

APPENDIX 9.7

FUTURES WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM REVIEW
FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS
EMPLOYERS, INSTRUCTORS OR TUTORS OF ACADEMIC UPGRADING,
CENTRE STAFF AND DIRECTORS/MANAGERS SESSIONS

1)   **In light of the current social and economic environment, what do you think are the major issues for the young people you serve in your community?**

Probes

• profile of youth
• emerging and future economic trends
• client education/employment/training/employment needs
• needs of your community (social, economic, housing, etc.)
• unmet needs of youth

2)   **Based on these issues, which needs do you think that the current Work Experience Program meets well, and why?**

Probes

• training needs of youth
• employment needs of youth (finding and keeping a job)
• needs of your community
• client linkages to services
• employer needs

3)   **Based on these issues, which needs do you think that the current Work Experience Program does not meet well, and why?**

Probes

• training needs of youth
• employment needs of youth (finding and keeping a job)
• needs of your community
• client linkages to services
• employer needs

4)   Lets recall the major issues for young people which have been identified in this group, as well as what you think currently works well, and doesn't work well in WEP to meet these needs. In this context, what do you believe the major objectives of the program <u>should</u> be, and who <u>should</u> the program be serving?

<u>Probes</u>

Program objectives: Client group served:
   • employment/education/training   • degree of disadvantage
   • transition to work   • work-readiness
   • work adjustment issues   • age

5)   **For this last question, please think again about what you believe the major objectives of the program ought to be, as well as who the program should be serving. Given these viewpoints, how would you suggest that the <u>design and operations</u> of the current Work Experience Program might be changed, and why?**

<u>Probes</u>

• program durations
• options used and their mix
• payment to clients/employers
• client eligibility/suitability

APPENDIX 9.8

FUTURES WORK EXPERIENCE REVIEW <u>WORKING REPORT</u>
CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1)   Did any of the key findings surprise you? What leads you to say this?

2)   What do the key findings suggest abour how the program is designed and how you are delivering it?

3)   What are the main questions you would like to have answered on the report?

APPENDIX 9.9

SUMMARY OF INPUT BY YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDERS
OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES
AND ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF SERVICE DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

In 1992/93, an Interministerial Working Group, comprised of representatives from the ministries transferring programs to the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board (OTAB), began preliminary work on guiding principles and essential functions of an ideal entry/re-entry system. The programs represented by the working group members covered programs for youth and older workers, persons on social assistance, as well as literacy training.

In preparation for OTAB, the working group developed a common understanding and language around the services that are needed for these participants. The ideal system the working group envisioned would be used by individuals seeking to make transitions to and from training and education into the work force, and includes those entering it for the first time, or re-entering it after an absence. It was understood that each program may not have all of the components outlined in the essential functions. However, the group agreed that within the whole range of programs and services in entry/re-entry, all of these functions must be available, and all must be guided by these fundamental principles. In other words, whatever programs and services are designed within the Entry/Re-Entry system, participants should have access to all the functions and services as needed as they move through the continuum.

Although this is a description of an Entry/Re-Entry system, it operates within a broader social, economic and educational system. It is important to ensure connection to these broader systems. It must also be kept in mind that the functions and services are not part of a linear or lock-step process; nor are they mutually exclusive.

In 1994, the Youth Section of the Learning and Employment Preparation Branch, OTAB, conducted four regional meetings to review the findings of a major program review (Work Experience Program). As part of this process, service providers of youth employment programming in Ontario reviewed these guiding principles and essential functions. Even though the exercise was not designed to achieve a consensus, there was a great deal of consistency in perspectives.

As a result of discussions, the following document outlines how the youth program deliverers have revised, expanded and clarified the original definitions. In most cases, the definitions of essential functions and guiding principles have been expanded to provide more information on what these components mean for this group. In some instances, commentary within the text also provides further information about the range of debate and discussion.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF ENTRY/RE-ENTRY SERVICE DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

An overall recommendation coming out of the discussion with youth service providers was that the principles and functions of entry/re-entry programming operate within the overall parameters of a mission statement which articulates its goals. Although groups did not develop a mission statement, many key ingredients of a mission statement were raised in discussion. The OTAB mission statement appears to closely reflect some of the comments, values and philosophies suggested by the groups. It is:

"Through its labour market partners, OTAB creates and sustains an effective, accessible and equitable system of training and adjustment programs and services in Ontario that

- *leads to the improvement of the lives of workers and potential workers;*
- *represents an investment in Ontario's prosperity in the context of a global economy; and*
- *contributes to the development of life-long learning and skills enhancement."*

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Participant-Centred**

  The process must be sensitive to individual participant needs, and be developed jointly by stakeholders (i.e. employers, academic staff, other social service agencies in the community).

  Comments: There must be a balance between the participant and the agency. The process should empower the participant towards self-help in the context of the expertise and knowledge of the agency. There was some debate around whether the youth is the "client" or whether the employer, labour market partners and broader community are also "clients". Most felt that the youth are our "clients" but that services must be delivered in close partnership with these other stakeholder groups.

- **Flexible and Relevant**

  The design must be sensitive to participant, employer, community, regional requirements and labour market needs.

- **Accessible and Equitable**

  There should no barriers to participation (including language and accommodation issues), as well as equity of access and outcome.

- **Co-Ordination/Partnership (Linked)**

  Co-ordinated services work in co-operation, not competition. Program design and delivery must form a continuum of services in the community. Partnerships are also formed to provide services ranging from the development of referral mechanisms, joint management, to the evaluation of programs. On an individual level, these are linked through case management.

- **Accountability (Effectiveness and Efficiency)**

  It is important to be able to demonstrate to participants, community partners and funders how the services operate within the guiding principles and provide value for money. Effectiveness is the pursuit of excellence in programs and services to meet participant and labour market/employer needs.

- **Communication**

  Clarity and understanding between stakeholders on how programs and services operate within OTAB's strategic policies and directions is crucial. This requires sound communication and clarification of program objectives, expectations and outcomes.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF ENTRY/RE-ENTRY SERVICE DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

The essential functions of entry/re-entry service design reflect a participant-centred approach to identifying employment needs and readiness in the context of a broader range of needs which may be presented. This framework is intended to break vocational counselling down into its component parts recognizing that the counselling approach (individual, group, etc.) is the process or model by which the functions are performed. These functions must reflect the guiding principles, including empowerment of the individual as a result of this participation.

The essential functions are not part of a lock-step or linear process, nor are the components mutually exclusive. Not all functions may be required or appropriate in every case and must be determined on an individual basis. It is recognized that some functions such as assessment, referral, monitoring and case management are ongoing through-out the process.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- **Community Parternship Development**

  This covers a whole range of activities including advocacy work, on-site visits, community outreach, community/participant needs assessment, employer development/liaison and service evaluation. The development of a continuum of service and the effectiveness of all other services relies on this function being performed well.

- **Assessment**

  a) Intake/Eligibility/Appropriateness

  This initial intake function fulfils administrative requirements and gathers initial participant information. Needs which cannot be met by entry/re-entry services result in referrals to other services and programs (may be concurrent or alternative activities).

  b) Employment Assessment

  The employment assessment builds on the intake component. It separates employment needs from other needs by gathering, analysing and synthesizing information about the participant, and relating it to employment strengths and needs, as well as labour market opportunities. Tools may include job shadowing, work experience, skills testing and other methods. This assessment leads to the development of short and/or long-term employment and educational planning.

- **Referrals**

  The referral function provides participants with necessary brokerage and linkages with other service providers either during or as an alternative to the employment program. (See **Case Management**)

- **Employment Planning**

  Based on the assessment, short and long term vocational goals are determined. The planning function identifies the steps individuals need to reach their employment objectives.

- **Employment Preparation**

  Employment preparation begins with the first steps identified in the individual participant's employment plan. This may include such things as adjustment skills, labour market knowledge and awareness to increase job readiness, resume writing, job search skills, life skills and interview techniques.

- **Learning**

  This function explores linkages to the learning system, as well as the value of continuing educational upgrading and learning or enhancing new skills.

- **Work Experience**

  The work experience component recognizes the value of placing participants in an employment opportunity to test out their employment plan, their employability skills, and to acquire new skills over the course of the placement. Work experience may be full or part-time, subsidized or unsubsidized, and may include arrangements such as job-shadowing and volunteerism. The placement is linked to the work that has been done through the employment plan, and is pulled together by all stakeholders in a training plan with measurable outcomes.

- **Monitoring and Case Management Support**

  Monitoring of participant's activities against the employment plan and the provision of support through-out the program is crucial. This includes job maintenance support, follow-up contact and service provision to facilitate transition to the next step.

APPENDIX 9.10

EVALUATION OF THE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM REVIEW MEETINGS
PROVINCIAL SUMMARY

JUNE, 1994

Total Number of Participants: 237

Total Number of Evaluation Forms Received: 149

Response Rate: 63%
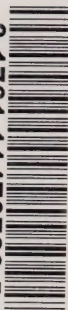
Overall Rating on a Scale of 1 to 5:

Excellent:	23	15%
Very Good:	86	58%
Good:	34	23%
Average:	4	3%
No Rating:	2	1%

Overall, the majority ranked the session as very good to excellent, and the vast majority identified the information presented and discussed as useful. Among the range of comments, participants found information-sharing among Centres, as well as between deliverers and staff of OTAB to be valuable. The opportunity to have input into the development of WEP action plans and the ideal entry/re-entry system were also rated as productive. A number of improvements were suggested, including allowing more time in small groups to discuss issues and develop strategies and plans. Increased opportunities for networking generally amongst colleagues was recommended.

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